

ISSN 0258 - 1744

# CHRISTIAN ORIENT

A JOURNAL OF EASTERN CHURCHES FOR CREATIVE THEOLOGICAL THINKING

DECEMBER 2005

VOL. XXVI NO.4



## ECCUMENISM

EDITORIAL

THE MALANKARA CATHOLIC CHURCH AND ITS NEW STATUS  
IN THE CATHOLIC COMMUNION

*Geevarghese Chediath*

THE SACRAMENTAL THEOLOGY OF  
ARCHBISHOP MAR IVANIOS

*Kurian Valuparambil*

CHURCH AND MISSION AND THE MALANKARA COMMUNITY

*Philip Chempakassery*

DOCCUMENTATION, NEWS & BOOKREVIEW

PROCESSED

MAY 08 2006

GTU LIBRARY



# CHRISTIAN ORIENT

A JOURNAL OF EASTERN CHURCHES FOR CREATIVE THEOLOGICAL THINKING

DECEMBER 2005 VOL. XXVI NO.4

## BOARD OF EDITORS

### Managing Editor

Dr. Thomas Mannooramparampil M.A. S.T.D.

## SECTION EDITORS

### Ecclesiology

Dr. James Puliurumpil

### Liturgy

Dr. Jose Kochuparambil S.T.D.

### Spirituality

Dr. Andrews Mekkattukunnel S.T.D.

### Ecumenism

Dr. Geevarghese Chediath S.T.D.

### News & Documentation

Dr. Thomas Koonammackal

## ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTION

### INDIA

Rs.80

### ABROAD

\$30 or Euro 30 by Air mail

\$15 or Euro 17 by Sea mail

## SINGLE COPY

### INDIA

Rs.20/-

### ABROAD

\$ 10 or the equivalent

## Inside This Edition

EDITORIAL .....	2
THE MALANKARA CATHOLIC CHURCH AND ITS NEW STATUS IN THE CATHOLIC COMMUNION .....	5
<i>Geevarghese Chediath</i>	
THE SACRAMENTAL THEOLOGY OF ARCHBISHOP MAR IVANIOS .....	14
<i>Kurian Valuparambil</i>	
CHURCH AND MISSION AND THE MALANKARA COMMUNITY .....	35
<i>Philip Chempakassery</i>	
DOCCUMENTATION .....	45
NEWS .....	47
BOOKREVIEW .....	48

Manuscripts and Book Reviews are to be sent to:

The Managing Editor

## CHRISTIAN ORIENT

P.B.No.1, Kottayam 686 010

Tel: 0481 - 571807, 571809, 578319, 574594, 574596

Fax: 91-481-578525

E-mail: ktm\_tmannoor@sancharnet.in

Web Page Address: www.oirsi.com

Copyright: Christian Orient Trust, Kottayam 686 010



*Today was born a child  
'Wonder' is the name given to Him  
For it is a wonder  
That God manifested Himself as a child*

(St. Ephrem, De Nat 1, 9)



*May the 'Wonder' of Bethlehem  
fill your heart with abundant blessings  
during this Holy Christmas and  
guide your life all through the New Year.*



## EDITORIAL

---

His Holiness Pope John Paul II, on 10<sup>th</sup> February 2005, raised the canonical status of the Malankara Catholic Church from the Metropolitan Church *sui juris* to the Major Archiepiscopal Church *sui juris*. By this act he was recognizing the vitality of the Malankara Catholic Church in the divine providence and was giving a green signal in the line of Ecumenism to all concerned. According to the common Code of Canons for the Eastern Churches, the Major Archbishop is equal to the Patriarch in dignity, right and obligations, but without the title. He is like the Patriarch, Father and Head (Pater et Caput- Abo' urisho') of the Individual Church. According to Catholic understanding, the Pope is the Supreme Pontiff of the Universal Church. In communion with him, the heads of the Major Archiepiscopal Churches are supreme heads of their Individual Churches. The title Patriarch is for the moment in catholic communion reserved to the Heads of the ancient Sees, such as Rome, Alexandria and Antioch. The Chaldeans and Armenians have added to their official title Catholicos, that of Patriarch also. Thus they use Catholicos-Patriarch. The Ukrainians also call their Major Archbishop Patriarch.

The Apostolic Nuncio in New Delhi His Excellency Pedro Lopez Quintana on 10<sup>th</sup> February 2005 at the Pattom St. Mary's

Cathedral, read the official Decree of His Holiness the Pope, signed by the Secretary of State His Eminence Cardinal Angelo Sodano. The Nuncio was present also for the installation on 14<sup>th</sup> May 2005. After reading the Decree, the Apostolic Nuncio announced to the public in the Cathedral that the new dignity is equivalent to that of Catholicos. The title Catholicos was in the tradition of the ancient Church. It was used by the Churches outside the Roman Empire. In fact it was equivalent to the title Patriarch. For the installation of the Major Archbishop – Catholicos Moran Mor Cyril Baselios, His Beatitude Moran Mor Ignatios Mousa I Daoud, the Cardinal Prefect of the Congregation for the Oriental Churches presided and the liturgical service was conducted according to the Syrian Antiochene tradition. His Beatitude Maran Mar Varkey Vithayathil and several dignitaries were present. It was a great recognition to the Malankara Catholic Church in the Catholic communion.

The news was well received by the Sister Churches in Kerala. Many considered it a step further in the path of Dialogue and Ecumenism. It proved that a reunited Church or a Church entering into visible communion with the Pope has the freedom to be autonomous and to be governed by their own bishops: they themselves can divide the



dioceses and elect their own bishops and develop their own theology. It was the demand of Archbishop Mar Ivanios during his early ecumenical contact with Rome. It is realized after 75 years. It can enhance the present ecumenical dialogue, initiated in 1989 between (1) the Catholic Church and the Malankara Orthodox Church, and (2) the Catholic Church and the Syrian Orthodox Church (Patriarch's faction). The present ecumenical Dialogue is a new phase in the contact between the Catholic Church under the Pope of Rome and the Malankara Orthodox Church for centuries.

This contact has a long history. Ever since the tragic Coonan Cross Oath (1653) by the whole Thomas Christians against the Portuguese Jesuit missionaries in India, and the eventual separation of a group from the full visible and canonical communion from the Apostolic See of Rome, the local leaders were trying their level best to reunite the community with their Catholic brethren, the Pazhayakuttukar. Thus Mar Thoma I, Mar Thoma IV, Mar Thoma V and Mar Thoma VI (Mar Dionysius I) and Pulikkottil Mar Dionysius made several attempts for reunion. They could not achieve the goal. Finally at the time of Vattasseril Mar Dionysius, Mar Ivanios of Bethany gave the lead for the visible communion and he succeeded. In 2005 the dialogue entered into a new phase with the raising of the status of the Malankara Catholic community.

We find a development and growth in the ecumenical relationship of Rome. During the 17<sup>th</sup> century when the Portuguese and other Western missionaries had the sole influence in

Rome, they blocked any attempt for reunion. In fact Mar Thoma, the Archdeacon made several attempts to rectify his fake imposition of hands by twelve priests. But the reply from the part of Rome at that time was negative. The two Apostolic commissaries, Msgr. Sebastiani and Hyacinth and the ruling Jesuit bishop Garcia excommunicated Mar Thoma I. During the subsequent centuries also the Western missionaries, working here in the land, were totally opposed to the reunion of the separated group. Mar Dionysius I, in fact entered into visible communion with the Catholic Church in 1799 and remained in the Catholic communion for six months, but he was not given any Episcopal jurisdiction. Rome was ready to recognize his Episcopal ordination. Almost a century later, by the time of Pulikkottil Mar Dionysius, Rome was prepared to receive the bishops as they are with the Antiochene Syriac liturgical traditions and pastoral authority over their faithful. But there is no evidence to show that the decision of the Cardinals was communicated to him. In 1930 the Roman reply was exactly the same as that of 1888. In 1930 Mar Ivanios demanded for the autonomy in communion. He constantly demanded for the recognition of the Catholicate with the Synod. But Rome was not prepared for that at that time and in 1932 established the Malankara Catholic hierarchy according to the then Roman Catholic ecclesiology and Latin pattern. The pastoral care of the faithful was territorially restricted and the Church was treated like a Latin Province with very limited authority. With the Second Vatican Council and the new Code of Canons for the Eastern Churches, we see a change of attitude. Thus one of the



demands of Mar Ivanios is now realized after 75 years. What remains to be realized is the pastoral care of the faithful outside the restricted geographical boundary.

Although most of the Sister Churches and leaders and leading Newspapers and other media hailed the new development as a great event in the history of the Malankara Catholic Church and in the field of ecumenism, some of the leaders of one of the sister churches in Kerala looked at it in a rather negative way. They tried to publish distorted version of the event and to misrepresent it before the public. It is really painful to see such old antagonistic attitude towards the Malankara Catholic Church. Ecumenical contact is not new in the history of the Malankara Church. Perhaps when one is constantly living in an atmosphere of fight, one may see the growth and development in other Churches as a threat. It could be a false fear. In an ecumenical era, it is not in accordance with the ecumenical norms to interfere in the internal affairs of other churches and try to tarnish their image. Whoever writes such articles and spreads such ideas are acting against charity, Christian values and human decency. When one sees from a distance one can may ask the question: What happened to these Christians? Some are uttering words which even those who are not in the Christian fold would not dare to utter.

Christian charity demands us to forget and forgive and open our hands towards our brethren even when they show signs of hatred and aversion. The Malankara Catholic Church will ever remember His Holiness Pope John Paul II, His Beatitude Ignatios Mousa Daoud

(I) the Cardinal Prefect, and the Apostolic Nuncio His Excellency Pedro Lopes Quintana. After Pius XI in 1930 and Cardinal Tisserant in 1958, it is these three eminent men who did something positive and tangible to the Malankara Catholic Church.

Let the present day Catholic – Malankara Orthodox Dialogue enable the Churches and their various dicasteries to see better the new ecclesial vision of Vatican II, the new openness of the Popes and the new status of the Malankara Catholic Church. Let us be men looking with a vision for the future rather than men looking behind the past and carrying all the burdens of the past. Let us try to purify our memory and pardon each other in the name of the Lord and let us not continue the mutual accusations of the 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> centuries or of the subsequent past.

Finally we hope that this process of dialogue will continue, so that the Malankara Major Archbishop can look after the pastoral care of all the faithful of this Church, wherever they are, without any hindrance and without dependence on any local Latin bishop. We hope that the present Holy Father will fulfill the promise made by his predecessor in New Delhi on 1<sup>st</sup> February 1986: *"Be assured that I shall do everything possible to ensure a just and fair settlement of the issue that will take into account all the pastoral exigencies of unity and truth"* (The Pope speaks to India, 32).

**Editor**



# THE MALANKARA CATHOLIC CHURCH AND ITS NEW STATUS IN THE CATHOLIC COMMUNION

*Geevarghese Chediath*

The year 2005 is for the Malankara Catholic Church of extreme importance. On 10<sup>th</sup> February His Holiness Pope John Paul II canonically raised the Church from the status of a Metropolitan Church *sui juris* to the status of a Major Archiepiscopal Church. The canonical installation took place on the 14<sup>th</sup> May 2005. Both for the announcement and the installation at the St. Mary's Cathedral at Pattom, Trivandrum, the Papal representative in India, His Excellency Archbishop Pedro Lopez Quintana was present. After reading the Papal decree His Excellency announced that the Major Archbishop is equivalent to *Catholicos*. His Beatitude Môran Môr Ignâtiyos Mousa I (Daoud), the Cardinal Prefect of the Congregation for the Eastern Churches was present for the installation. He was the main celebrant for the Eucharistic celebration and for the installation and he conferred the insignia of the Major Archbishop on His Beatitude Môran Môr Cyril Baselios *Catholicos*.

His Beatitude Maran Mar Varkey Vithayathil, Major Archbishop of the Syro-Malabar Church and Metropolitan Mar Joseph Powathil, of Changanachery, Most Rev. Soosa Pakiam, Latin Archbishop of Trivandrum, the Syro-Malabar Hierarchs Mar

Kuriakose Kunnassery Archbishop of Kottayam, Mar Jacob Thoomkuzhy Metropolitan of Trissur, Mar George Punnakkottil of Kothamangalam, Mar Mathew Arackal of Kanjirappally, Mar Mathew Anikkuzhikkattil of Idukki, Bishop Leon Dharmaraj of Kottar, Bishop Stanley Roman of Kollam, Bishop Thomas Kariyil of Punalur, Bishop emeritus Joseph Fernandez of Kollam and several other dignitaries and large crowd were present for the installation. Both the announcement and the installation were widely reported by the media and the leading Newspapers in Kerala, Malayala Manorama, Deepika and Mathrbhumi wrote excellent editorials about the new status of the Malankara Catholic Church.

Secondly on the 19<sup>th</sup> February Fr. Joseph Konnath, a priest of the Archdiocese of Trivandrum was ordained bishop for the Malankara Catholics in America and Europe. He assumed the name Joseph Mar Thomas. He was appointed by His Holiness Pope John Paul II on 5<sup>th</sup> January 2005 as Auxiliary bishop of Trivandrum and Apostolic Administrator.

Thirdly on 19<sup>th</sup> -21<sup>st</sup> September 2005, the Malankara Catholic Church celebrated at Punnamood, Mavelikkara, and the birth-place of its first Archbishop Mar Ivanios (1882-



1953) the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of its full, visible and canonical communion with the ancient Apostolic See of Rome. Again the Papal representative, His Excellency Archbishop Pedro Lopes Quintana was present for the Jubilee celebration to convey the message of the Holy Father Pope Benedict XVI. The Vice-President of India, and several of the ministers of the State including the Chief Minister of Kerala Mr. Oommen Chandy, graced the occasion by their participation. After His Eminence Eugene Cardinal Tisserant, it is His Beatitude Môran Môr Ignâtîyos Cardinal Mousa I (Daoud) and His Excellency Archbishop Pedro Lopes Quintana who did something tangible for the Malankara Catholic Church.

### Various kinds of Churches in the Catholic Communion

The Catholic Church is the communion of individual (*sui juris*) Churches. There are seven Patriarchal Churches and three Major Archiepiscopal Churches, three Metropolitan Churches and seven other autonomous Churches. In the Catholic communion, all these Churches are of equal rights. There may be inequality among the Churches due to numerical strength or due to other historical factors. According to the mind of the Second Vatican Council, in spite of all the factors, they are of equal status and are equally entrusted to the pastoral care of the Pope of Rome (*Orientalium Ecclesiarum*, 3). The Pope, as the successor. St. Peter has the right to provide for the growth and functioning of all the Churches in the Catholic communion.

### Major Archiepiscopal Churches

A major archiepiscopal Church is a patriarchal Church, however, without this title. "A Major Archbishop is a Metropolitan of a See determined or acknowledged by the supreme authority of the Church, who presides over an entire Eastern autonomous Church, but is not endowed with the patriarchal title" (CCEO c.151). He is the Father and Head of the Church *sui juris*, as the Patriarch is in his Church. So he may be called "a Patriarch without the title". There are *three Archiepiscopal Churches* in the Catholic communion. They are the Ukrainian Church (officially recognised as Major Archiepiscopal Church in 1963), the Syro-Malabar Church (1992) and the Malankara Catholic Church (2005). Their protobishops enjoy all the canonical powers of the patriarchs, but they do not bear the patriarchal title. Moreover when they are elected by the Synod, they have to get the confirmation of the Pope of Rome before their installation. Patriarchs and Major Archbishops can have an apocrisary, i. e. procurator, at the Roman Apostolic See (c. 61)<sup>1</sup>. Practically a Major Archbishop is a Patriarch in regard to canonical rights and obligations but without the title of Patriarch. However, the Ukrainian Church generally calls its Major Archbishop, Patriarch or mentions him simply as the 'Head of the Ukrainian Catholic Church'. Like the Patriarchs, the Major Archbishop need not ask the Pope for the Pallium, while other Metropolitans of the Eastern Catholic Churches outside a Patriarchate have to ask for it as a sign of their communion with the head of the college of bishops (c.156).

<sup>1</sup> Actually the Syriac, Maronite, Melkite, Chaldean, Armenian and Ukrainian Churches have appointed their respective apocrisaries (procurators) with the Holy Roman See according to c. 61. See *Annuario Pontificio* 2005, 3-9.



## The Malankara Catholic Church

The Malankara Catholic Church was founded by St. Thomas and it continued as the one holy Catholic Apostolic Church of Christ in this part of the globe till 1653. Then a section broke away from the full, visible canonical communion with the Roman successor of St. Peter and gradually entered into relationship with the Syriac Orthodox (often called "Jacobite") Patriarch of Antioch. During the 19<sup>th</sup> century this community came into contact with the Anglican Protestant missionaries from Europe with the Lutheran tendencies. By the second part of the 19<sup>th</sup> century the Antiochene "Jacobites" succeeded in making this Church part of their church, although many in the community were opposed to such a move. The Antiochene Jacobites made use of the internal factionalism to subdue it and make it "Jacobite". At present there are two distinct factions in this community: one group professing its adherence to the Syriac Orthodox Patriarch of Antioch (Patriarch's faction: Muvattupuzha) and the other faction trying to maintain its autonomy (Catholics' faction: Kottayam). The civil litigation over the temporalities of this Church continues without any peaceful settlement till our days.

Ever since its separation from the Catholic communion the leaders of the separated group were trying to restore the ecclesial communion with the Apostolic See of Rome. Thus Mar Thoma I (1653-1670), Mar Thoma IV (1688-1728), Mar Thoma V (1728-1765), and Mar Thoma VI (1761-1808) tried their level best for the reunion. In fact Mar Thoma VI entered into visible communion with Rome in 1799 at Alapuzha Thatham pally. But the Western

missionaries who were controlling the Church here in India in those days were thoroughly opposed to the communion of the separated group. They feared that their communion will endanger the very presence of the missionaries here in the land. Pulikkottil Mar Dionysius (1865-1909) and Vattasseril Mar Dionysius (1908-1934) again tried to re-establish the lost communion. In 1930 their attempts were crowned with success. The Malankara Catholic Church in its present form is the result of the ecumenical efforts of the Orthodox leaders during the early part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

In 1930 when Archbishop Mar Ivanios led the reunion movement, there were only a handful of people to join him. Rome gave authority to Mar Ivanios the then Metropolitan of Bethany, acknowledging his jurisdiction over all the reuniting people. That means his pastoral authority was not restricted to a limited territory. When Rome eventually realised that the community is viable and is giving signs of growth, it established in 1932, the Malankara Catholic ecclesiastical Province of Trivandrum with Tiruvalla as its suffragan. According to the mentality in the Roman circles of those days, the authority of the bishops became territorially restricted between Kanyakumari in the South and Ponnani in the North. As a consequence the Malankara Catholic bishops could not go outside this limited territory. This state continued until 1958 when the then Secretary of the Oriental Congregation, His Eminence Eugene Cardinal Tisserant, extended the territory to Malabar and a few districts of Tamil Nadu and Karnataka. Thereafter there was no further move to extend the geographical extension.



When the Code of Canons of the Eastern Churches was promulgated by Pope John Paul II, the Malankara Catholic Church was a Metropolitan Church. In 2005 it is raised from the status of a Metropolitan Church to the status of a Major Archiepiscopal Church with the Synodal structure of its own. Canonically and juridically this Church is now a Major Archiepiscopal Church and its Head is enjoying the rights of a Patriarch, although without the title Patriarch, which is reserved for the moment in the Catholic communion to the Heads some ancient Apostolic Sees in the Middle East.

There is a new situation. Both the officers of the Roman Curia as well as the faithful and clergy of the Malankara Church have to realise it and consider this Church in a different way from the one they were accustomed to. Others also have to recognise this fact. They can no more consider this Church as a Province of the Roman Catholic Church which is but one of the Churches *sui iuris*. The Malankara Catholic Church is in full, visible canonical communion with the Pope of Rome, the successor of St. Peter and the Head of the College of bishops. Because of this, the Pope of Rome is the 'Supreme Pontiff of the Universal Church'<sup>2</sup> and recognising this precedence in love, the Major Archbishop of the Malankara Catholic Church is Father and Head of this Church.

### Catholicos and Maphrian

The title *Catholicos* was used to designate the supreme Heads of the Churches in Persia Armenia and Georgia i.e. Churches outside the Roman Empire.

*Catholicos* means universal or common head. Although the title *Catholicos* is equivalent to that of the Patriarch, these Churches also added later the title Patriarch to that of *Catholicos*. Thus today they are called *Catholicos-Patriarch* (with the double title). The former Eastern Catholic legislation contained in the *Motu proprio* "*Cleri sanctitatis*" mentioned expressly the title *Catholicos*: "The *Catholicos* who does not have the title of Patriarch is equal to a Major Archbishop". The new Code (CCEO) does not mention it. It is left to the Individual Churches to formulate the titles in accordance with their traditions found in their Particular Laws.

*Maphrian* (fruit-bearer) is a title used to designate the representative of the Syriac Orthodox Patriarch of Antioch in Persia since 629. His status was similar to that of a Latin Primate or of an Apostolic Delegate. He had, however, supra-Episcopal powers which he always has executed in the name of the Syriac Orthodox Patriarch of Antioch. *Cleri Sanctitatis* also mentions the *Maphrian*: "The Metropolitan who has the title and dignity of a *Maphrian* is equal to an Archbishop without prejudice to the duties which come from his subjection to the authority of the Patriarch". The *Maphrian* was not entitled to have an *apocrisary* at Rome. (CS cc. 220,331). The *Maphrian* was not elected by the Synod but appointed by the Patriarch. Hence the terms *Catholicos* and *Maphrian* are not interchangeable.

On 10<sup>th</sup> February 2005 at Pattom St. Mary's Cathedral, when the Apostolic Nuncio Archbishop Pedro Lopez Quintana, after

<sup>2</sup> *Annuario Pontificio* 2005, p.23\*



reading the Papal Decree raising the Malankara Catholic Church to the status of a Major Archiepiscopal Church, announced, that the Major Archbishop is equivalent to Catholicos, He was not referring either to the three ancient Catholicates outside the Roman Empire nor to the Catholicates/Maphrianates existing in India among the Malankara Orthodox/Syrian Orthodox Churches. It is a new institution. It is something new in the history of the Catholic Church and is unique. The title Catholicos is in current use among the Malankara faithful in Kerala since 1912, and Mar Ivanios continuously requested for its recognition by Rome in his ecumenical negotiations. This title is recognised now by the Apostolic Nuncio, the representative of the Pope in India, now to the Major Archbishop of the Malankara Catholic Church, Môrân Môr Cyril Baselios. The Nuncio himself remitted him the insignia of the Catholicos.

### *The Malankara Catholic Catholicate*

When Mar Ivanios entered into ecumenical negotiations with Rome in the name of the bishops of the *Metran Kakeshy* (today's Malankara Orthodox Syrian Church) according to the decision of the Synod, there were three demands:

1. that the position of the Catholicos and the Synod should be recognized; i. e., the autonomy of the Malankara Apostolic Church should be maintained;
2. the bishops should have authority over their faithful wherever they are;
3. the liturgical and other ecclesiastical traditions should be respected and should not

be changed; i.e. the integral Oriental tradition should be preserved without any change.

At that time, according to the pre-Vatican II ecclesiology, the first demand was not recognised. Now it is realised after 75 years. That is why the Apostolic Nuncio, the representative of the Pope, announced it at the Pattom Cathedral on the 10<sup>th</sup> February in the presence of a large crowd. It was widely reported by the media. That is why the Apostolic Nuncio gave the insignia of the Catholicos to Môrân Môr Cyril Baselios, the Father and Head of the Malankara Catholic Church. It was the constant aspiration of the Malankara Catholics to get the Church raised to the status of the Catholicate with its own Holy Synod. I was witnessing the announcement at Pattom Cathedral. Never have I seen such a great joy and enthusiasm at the face of the large crowd present, when the Nuncio announced *that the Major Archbishop is equivalent to Catholicos*, according to the Syriac and Indian tradition. It was a moment of great jubilation. A great dream found its realization and a great honour has been conferred upon the Malankara Catholic Church by the Supreme Pontiff of the Catholic Church.

It took several years for the realization of this aim. There was a lot of correspondence and discussions among the dicasteries of the Roman Curia. The Holy Father was firmly convinced of the vitality of this Apostolic Church and the need to raise it to a higher status. In one of the latest *ad limina* visits of the Malankara Catholic bishops, he had stated with particular joy: "the Malankara Catholic Church is one of the fastest growing Churches in the Catholic communion".

---



The news was well received by all in India and outside, especially by the Malankara community. The newspapers wrote editorials on this extraordinary event and the Television channels gave it wide coverage. The canonical installation took place on 14<sup>th</sup> May at the Pattom Cathedral under the pontificate of Benedict XVI. During the Eucharistic celebration, the installation was conducted according to the Syro-Antiochene tradition. In his speech, His Beatitude Moran Môr Ignâtîyos Mousa I Daoud emphasised that, in the Catholic communion, there is neither a big Church nor a small Church. All the Churches of this communion are equal in dignity and mission. He announced that the Major Archbishop is equal to a Patriarch in dignity and honour, although he does not have the patriarchal title. He wished that the Malankara Catholic Church continued its ecumenical vocation, increase in the number of faithful, priests, bishops and dioceses. After the ceremony, there was a public reception for the new Catholicos. His Eminence Maran Mar Varkey (Cardinal Vithayathil) said that it is just that the Major Archbishop of the Malankara Church be called Catholicos, this being in accordance with the tradition of this Church.

### *Particular Laws*

From the time of the full and visible communion of Mar Ivanios with the Petrine Apostolic Church of Rome was restored, the Roman Apostolic See was very careful in persuading this Church to preserve the integral Oriental traditions. The Malankara Catholic Church is in the process of formulating its *Particular Laws*. It is certain that with the formulation and promulgation of these laws,

the genuine authentic Eastern traditions would be preserved and fostered

### *Migration in India and outside and the problem of territorial restriction*

In 1930 when Mar Ivanios entered into full communion with Rome, the Kerala people, especially the Syriac Orthodox of both factions, were chiefly centred in today's central Kerala (in the then Travancore-Kochi States). In 1947 India became independent and people began to move about in the free country for job and settlement. The Syrian Christians also migrated in large numbers to the Malabar region (which was incorporated into the new State of Kerala in 1956) and to the big industrial cities in India. Today there are large numbers of Malankara Christians (Catholics as well as non-Catholics) in the various cities and states in India. The non-Catholics (Orthodox Syrians, Syriac Orthodox, and Marthomites) have their own Hierarchies throughout India. But for the Malankara Catholics so far there is no adequate provision for the pastoral care of the migrants. It is a new situation, which has to be faced by all who love the Church of Christ.

Another further development is the migrant workers in large numbers in the *Gulf countries* in recent years. They are left uncared for long and the erosion of faith is unthinkable. It is an unpardonable mistake not to take care of their pastoral needs sufficiently, properly and adequately. This situation was presented to the Pope several times by the Malankara Catholic and Syro-Malabar bishops, but so far, even 40 years after the Vatican Council II, nothing tangible and effective has been done



in this direction. During the latest Synod of bishops in Rome(2005) also as a representative of the Oriental Catholic Churches in India Maran Mar Varkey Vithayathil, Major Archbishop of the Syro-Malabar Church raised the issue at the assembly. What he argued for the Syro-Malabar Church is all the more true regarding the Malankara Catholic Church.

*"The restriction of the proper territory of this Church for over a hundred years now, has created serious problems both in her missionary activity as well as the proper pastoral care of her faithful in India and abroad."*

Although the Malankara Catholic Church is raised to the status of a Major Archiepiscopal Church and its Father and Head is called Catholicos having the rights and powers of a Patriarch according to the Code of Canons of the Eastern Churches, his jurisdictional authority is very much restricted by the territorial limitations. This is the hurdle, which has to be removed immediately. The Malankara Catholic Church has the inalienable right to take care of its faithful wherever they are. They cannot be hindered by any one. In

the same way the right to preach the Gospel cannot be denied to any Church. It is an ecumenical scandal in the Indian subcontinent.<sup>3</sup> After several memoranda, Pope John Paul II assured on 1<sup>st</sup> February 1986, after his arrival in Delhi, that the Decree on the Oriental Churches (nos.3-4) would be properly implemented: "Be assured that I shall do everything possible to ensure a just and fair settlement of the issue that will take into account all the pastoral exigencies of unity and truth"<sup>4</sup>.

### *Catholicos of All India (Catholicos d'kolleh Hendo)*

The Head of the Thomas Christians had always had the title "Metropolitan of All India" (*Metropolita d'kolleh Hendo*), Metropolitan and door of All India (*Metropolita u tara' d'kolleh Hendo*), Metropolitan of the See of St. Thomas (*Metropolita d'kurzia d'Mar Tomas Slibâ*). Even after the Synod of Udayamperur (1599), the Latin Bishops Roz(1599-1563), Britto(1624-1641), and Garcia(1641-1657) used this title. The Archdeacon of the Thomas Christians was Archdeacon of all India (*Arkadiakon d'kolleh Hendo*). Even Parampil

<sup>3</sup> A lot of articles were written on the *inequality of the Individual Churches(sui juris)* in the Indian Subcontinent regarding the pastoral care of the emigrants and the missionary obligations. The author of this article has written in the past several articles about it and tried to draw the attention of those concerned. See for example the following articles: G. Chediath, Unity versus Uniformity - An Ecumenical Question: in *Christian Orient* 2/4(1981)141-164; Also published in German: in *Der Christliche Osten*, 37/3-4(1982)93-103 and in *Ut Omnes Unum* 45(1982) 60-64, 89-96, 120-127; One Territory, one Bishop, one Jurisdiction-Solution to the Problems?: in *Christian Orient* 4/1(1983)14-30; Ecumenical Scandal: in *Christian Orient* 7/4(1986)153-155; A Voice in the Wilderness: in *Christian Orient* 19/1(1998)17-25; also in Dutch: in *Het Christelijk Oosten*, 51/1-2(1999) 83-98. Reflection on the Ecumenical Movement: in *Christian Orient* 24/4(2003)185ff. Ecumenism in India: in *Studia Oecumenica* 1(2001)Opole, 143-154; Ecumenism in Practice: in *Christian Orient* 8/4(1987)151-152; Problems and Prospects of Evangelization in India-An Ecumenical Perspective: in *Jeevadhara* 13/76(1983)253-265; The Anomalous Situation in the Indian Church: in *The Freedom Fighters of the Thomas Christians*, ed .T. Vellilamthadam -T. Kurianal, Kottayam,1986,p.75-82; *Ecumenism in Danger*,(ed.Chediath and Vellilamthadam) Kottayam, 1986.

<sup>4</sup> *The Pope speaks to India*, 32.



Chandy Metran (1663-1687) made use of this title. Some of the *Putbenkur* leaders (non-Catholics) continued to use it. It has to be reinstated. His Beatitude Major Archbishop Môrân Môr Cyril Baselios is the **Catholicos of All India** of the blessed Malankara Syrian Catholic Church in the Apostolic See of St. Thomas. He, as Father and Head of the Malankara faithful, should have direct right to meet the pastoral needs of the Malankara faithful adequately and properly, without dependence on any local Latin bishop. **We hope and wish that the new Pope His Holiness Benedict XVI would fulfil the promise made by his predecessor in 1986 at New Delhi.**

### *Reaction*

The attitude of the other Churches and communities to the new status of the Malankara Catholic Church and to its Father and Head Môrân Môr Cyril Baselios, Major Archbishop-Catholicos, was welcoming and cordial. As is known from the history of the Reunion Movement, the *Metran Kakshy* (today's *Malankara Orthodox Church*) had from the very beginning a very negative attitude towards the New Ecumenical Movement and towards Mar Ivanios and the growing community. They did everything in their power to crush it and tarnish the image of its Head. But since the unity of all Christians is the will of the Lord of the Church, the community grew and in God's abundant mercy it is now a Major Archiepiscopal Church with 500,000 faithful bearing witness to the unity of mankind and proclaiming the peace to all. It is one of the very flourishing missionary Churches in the whole of Christianity. When the Church was raised to the status of a Major

Archiepiscopal Church and when the Head was called Catholicos, some of the Orthodox official and non-official publications took a slightly negative attitude towards it.

Some of the Malankara Orthodox Prelates and priests and lay persons looked at it with suspicion and concern. They tried to present a false picture among the public regarding the new status of the Malankara Catholic Church. They continue even now in certain quarters their false propaganda against the Malankara Catholic Church and its leaders both present and past. They even protested to the Secretariat for the unity of Christians and threatened that they would withdraw from the ecumenical discussions with the Catholic Church. They gave to the media in a distorted way a personal letter from the Secretariat for the Unity of Christians to one of the Orthodox bishops and tried to tarnish the image of the Catholic Church, especially the Malankara Catholic Church. The Malankara Catholic Church had to clarify certain points to the media and the public in order to remove the confusion, created by their misrepresentation. It is unfortunate that such a thing happened from the part of some of our Orthodox brethren.

There is often an accusation from the part of some non-Catholic brethren that Rome is considering the Churches in communion as second rate Churches. But when Rome is trying to raise the canonical status of the churches and give them more autonomy in the light of the Second Vatican Council and the new Canon Law, they show signs of unrest and use a threatening language that they would withdraw from all ecumenical negotiations. They conveniently forget that the Reunion of 1930



is the culmination of the ecumenical attempts of the separated community and their leaders in the past. One cannot simply ignore it and the life of the Malankara Catholic Church in the Catholic communion for 75 years and speak of the ecumenical negotiations of the Orthodox with the Catholic Church as something new. One can say that since 1989 there is a new phase of negotiations. One must not forget that there is vast difference in the ecclesiology of 1930 and the post Conciliar period. There is great difference in the ecumenical attitude of the Catholic Church in 1930 and now. One has to take into consideration the great post-Conciliar change which is prevailing in the Roman circle regarding both the *sui iuris* Churches in the Communion and the non-Catholic sister Churches. If one continues to keep the old prejudices against the Catholic Church, there will not be any tangible ecumenical progress. It is very clear in the Catholic–Malankara Orthodox theological Dialogue. In the ecumenical dialogues, all the dialoguing partners should aim at visible unity as the Lord wills at his time and in the way he determines.

This aim, in my opinion, is lacking in the Catholic–Malankara Orthodox present day Dialogue. However, their antagonism is very much mitigated when one compares it to their reaction to the Malankara Catholic Church in the beginning and during the early periods of its growth.

The Malankara Catholic Church is in full communion with the whole Catholic Church whatever tradition the Individual Churches are following. The Malankara Catholic Church follows the ecclesiology of the Second Vatican Council. It follows the ecumenical principles of the Council and the teachings of the recent Popes. It is fully committed to Ecumenism. It believes that the Lord wants the unity of all Christians and it has to be done according to the will of the Lord. It does not think that the Catholicate of the Malankara Church is against anybody or is the continuation of any line, but is to foster better relations with all men of good will, especially with our Malankara Syrian Orthodox and Orthodox Syrian brethren in Kerala, who are blood of our own blood and flesh of our own flesh.

---



# THE SACRAMENTAL THEOLOGY OF ARCHBISHOP MAR IVANIOS

*Kurian Valuparmbil*

The Syriac Churches have not developed a theology of the sacraments (mysteries-*raze*) of the Church, as the Latin Church has done. But this does not mean that they have not reflected on them. "Reflection on the Mysteries as celebration of the Economy of Salvation (*Mdabrânuta*) is always done in the concrete context of the respective liturgical celebration."<sup>1</sup> It is certainly meaningful to search for the sacramental theology of Archbishop Mar Ivanios (+1953), the greatest ecumenist in the 20<sup>th</sup> century in India. The following words were from his speech as a Deacon on the Sacraments of the Church:

"We should receive the spirit and body of Christ both spiritually and bodily into our spirit and body. There are ways that Christ himself has ordered and decided to receive him both spiritually and bodily, that is to say visibly and invisibly, into us. They are called mysteries or sacraments".<sup>2</sup> Another citation from another occasion: "This river that has flown from Christ's holy heart – the river that carries and flows – must flow into your soul. Therefore you must construct channels into your soul. These channels are the holy Sacraments (qudashas)".<sup>3</sup>

These words could be said to be the key of Mar Ivanios' perception and instruction of the sacraments (mysteries, *raze*) of the Church. They show that the mysteries are the ways that Christ himself instituted for mankind for the God-man communion: in order to get united with Him in the Church, His *bride and mysterious body*. They also show that the truths about the mysteries must be spelt out for the spiritual uplift of the believers, and that the union with Christ through the mysteries in the Church shall lead the faithful to manifest their unity and of the whole mankind.

The first part of his perception of the mysteries is that which Mar Ivanios received from tradition – more particularly from the Syriac tradition. It reached him chiefly through their celebration in the Church and the liturgical texts and their commentaries by ancient commentators. His awareness of the context of his Church and the urgent need of the community enlightened him to see the second part of his perception lying deep in the mysteries. In the original Syriac tradition, as articulated by Mar Aprem(+373) and carried forward by the Syriac Fathers, the mysteries

---

1. Pro Oriente *Syriac Dialogue*, 4 .119.

2. Thomas Inchackalody, *Archbishop Mar Ivanios*, vol.1, Trivandrum, 1957, p.61.

3. Mar Ivanios, *I'isudha Kumpasâram oru Dhyânâpadhanam*, Kottayam, 1980, p.12.

---



are aimed at the holistic salvation of both the individual and the whole creation.<sup>4</sup> Certainly Mar Ivanios' writings and instructions reflect close familiarity with the writings of the Syriac, Greek and Latin Fathers. He was also aware of the theological positions of medieval Western theologians, the Council of Trent and the main line post-Tridentine Western Catholic and Protestant theologians. But his basic perception of the mysteries, inherited from the Syriac tradition, had pitched its tent with him. He saw its glory. Crossing the dreading waves, he jumped into the wide ocean of his Church's perception of the mysteries, and encountering undercurrents delved deep into its depth, and collected the pearls, which could be rightly designated as his basic theological highlights of the mysteries.

## Sources

Mar Ivanios has not written voluminous 'systematic' treatises on the general sacramental theology or on each of the mysteries. But his ideas could be collected from his writings and speeches. In 1991 I collected a list of thirty-eight titles of Mar Ivanios.<sup>5</sup> Besides these, there are several letters which he wrote to different dignitaries, ecclesiastics, members of religious communities and friends. Many of these letters are theological discussions. His numerous exhortations to the Bethany Nuns, both before and after his visible and canonical communion with the Catholic Church, include short expositions of Christ, Church, Priesthood,

Eucharist and Penance. They are valuable source for his sacramental theology. Mother Salga has collected the Sermons.<sup>6</sup> In addition to these Sermons we have the following treatises from him on the Sacraments of the Church: (1) His speeches on the Sacraments as a Deacon. (2) His *Sabbāvatsaram – Oru Daivāḍāstra Viśakalanam* (The Liturgical Year – A Theological Analysis, 1926) (3) His short treatise *On Married Life (Vivāhajīvitam, 1928)* throws light on the theology and spirituality of the mystery of marriage. (4) The *Vedōpadeśapādhāvali (A Series of Catechetical Text Books, 1943)* published by him (5) The three volumes *Tūkkāsa (Rubrics of the Holy Services, 1943)* prepared and published by him.

Both his biographers and those who were lucky to hear him directly witness that he attracted numerous crowds eager to hear from him illustrious, erudite and enticing words on Gospel themes and the mysteries. He, in fact, was a master theologian (*Malpān*) of the mysteries. There are two periods, the pre-reunion and the post-reunion, in his career as a theologian of the mysteries. These writings expose the competent, mature and genuine oriental theologian he is. However, he was not a theologian in the sense that he used *logos* (*logoi* = words) orally or in writing prolifically to say more about *theos* (God) than to express his love from and towards Him, whereby he incited others to love God and others. It is remarked that in the Western 'enlightened' and 'scientific' understanding one could be a

4. *Syriac Dialogue*, 4 .47.

5. J.Madey-K.Valuparambil, in *Biographisch-Bibliographisches Kirchenlexikon* VI,1478-1481; G. Chediath, *The Malankara Catholic Church*, Kottayam, 2003, p.322-323.

6. Mother Salga's collection is still in manuscript form at the Bethany Provincial House ,Nalanchira. Many of the references in this article are taken from this collection. We have not given the references for all the instances.



'theologian' without actually knowing God in love. Mar Ivanios was, primarily and foremost, a theologian in the sense that he was a *theophilos and philatheos*, a friend and lover of God. This is what we read from what he has given through his life, orally or in writing. He was one who fell in passionate love with God and, on that account, with others, and wanted and challenged them to do the same. In those days compartmentalization of theological subjects was not the ideal oriental way. He had a clear perception of God, world, humanity, Christ, the Church and her mysteries. He was also fully skilled to present his perceptions and ideas very systematically, logically, attractively and effectively. On the mysteries of the Eucharist and the mystery of Penance he reflects at length and shares his reflections with the evident intention of inciting them to make the maximum profit from those divine 'incarnations' (mysteries) of Christ's immense salvific love.

### Presupposition

Anthropological Christology and Soteriology of the West Syriac tradition is presupposed for any discussion of the sacramental theology of that tradition. Man with visible body and invisible spirit (soul) represents the whole material and immaterial creatures. By man's fall not only his relation with God but also that of the whole universe with God was broken with the resultant mortality. Conversely reunion of the whole creation with God, for which "the whole creation has been groaning in travail" (Rom 8, 22), has to take place through man. But man in his fallen nature was unable to realize it by himself. That is why God the Word, the Only Begotten of God became man to rebind

humanity with God, and thereby restore the whole universe in its relation with God. The incarnated Son of God, in whom divinity and humanity have existed in perfect unity, is God's unique way for humanity for reunion with Him. Christ's visible body is the way to his invisible divinity. After his glorification, the Church has grown as his body. The reunion and salvation that he has established is realized in the Church in the celebration of the mysteries. Those who co-operate with God by receiving the mysteries can be rebound to him. The reunion with God through Christ by the mysteries of the Church must necessarily lead to the full unity of the Churches that celebrate them.

There are certain main emphases of the sacramental theology of the West Syriac tradition: (1) The fallen nature of humanity necessitated Christ's incarnation to save humanity (salvation as re-union with God); (2) The representative status of man both in his relation to God and to the universe with regard to the disruption of its relation as well as its re-union with God; (3) The sacramental (sign-reality: symbol) nature of Christ's human body: Jesus Christ, perfect God and perfect man, as the reality of the fulfilled re-union of God and humanity, and as the way for the re-union of mankind with God (i.e., re-union through the body of Jesus Christ); (4) The sacramentality of the Church, the body of the glorified Christ; (5) Mysteries of the Church as the way correcting the mistake that took place in creation: mysteries of the Church are the ways for man to re-establish the unity with God through Christ in the Church; (6) Procession of the mysteries from Christ's wounded side on the cross; (7) Relation



between the individual's reception of the mysteries and the simultaneous celebration of the reception of the same mystery by the Church (e.g., marriage of a man and a woman in the Church is celebration of the marriage of Christ with the Church); (8) Insistence on the co-operation of the recipient; (9) Ordained minister must necessarily officiate : because priesthood of the Church comes from Christ's priesthood, which in its turn is from the Old Testament; (10) Anthropology and Sacred Scripture as the two defining characters of sacramental thought : Scripture as source of theology and for explaining the symbols; (11) More emphasis on the eschatological aspect; (12) Holy Spirit acting through the Church as the principle of the mysteries; (13) Insistence on the visible and invisible aspects of the mysteries; (14) The mysteries as signs (symbols), but not as miracles; (15) Eucharist is the mystery of unity. - Most of these motifs are in the forefront and foundational in what Mar Ivanios has written or spoken on the mysteries of the Church.

First I present a general picture of Mar Ivanios' methods of teaching about the mysteries and secondly his perception of Jesus Christ and the Church as Mysteries and then the Sacraments (mysteries) of the Church.

### I. A General View of Mar Ivanios' Method of Exposition

Mar Ivanios' sacramental perception is basically that of the Syriac tradition. The Syriac tradition in general perceives the mysteries of the Church as celebrations of *mdabarânuta'* of Jesus Christ, our Lord and Savior, whereby

the faithful participate in the same.<sup>7</sup> The Pro-Oriente Syriac Consultation describes it as follows: "Sacraments are celebrations of the *mdabarânuta'* (God's economy of salvation) in Jesus Christ: God's plan in Jesus Christ to save humanity by offering his divine grace through those rites which the Church recognizes as holy *razê'*"<sup>8</sup>. The Syriac tradition views the mysteries as symbols: way and reality.

Mar Ivanios had a theological vision of the mysteries. May I start with a summary review of the method he has employed. He has followed different methods as is suitable that sometimes is multivalent and combined. Mar Ivanios spoke for long and wrote at considerable length on the mysteries. History witnesses that while sharing aloud his reflections on the mysteries before an untiring audience from his fiery tongue burning words flew logically and systematically. So also while reflecting on them silently before the Lord and with writing apparatus, hearty words zealously and unintermittently drove his hands to draw activating multicolor lines for many yet to draw. Oral communication on the depths of the mysteries was his favorite method. Already while a student to priesthood he preached on them on outdoor platforms and parish after parish of his Jacobite Church. On that account he was rightly known in his Church as the Deacon of mysteries (*qûdaša šemmâdan*). For hours could he keep crowds attentive to his sermons. He made use of every availed occasion to speak on the mysteries, particularly the Eucharist, as central to spiritual life.

7. Mar Ivanios, *Sabbâvatsaram*, 7,9-10.

8. Syriac Dialogue, 4 .119.

### Syriac Way with Passionate Love

As early as 1923 and later as well, he wrote and published books on some of the mysteries. His books on the mysteries of Eucharist and Penance and his discussions on Christ, the Church, Eucharist, Priesthood etc. in the course of his exhortations to the Bethany Nuns are 'reflective.' In this he is following the method of the early great Syriac writers. The Syriac way is not investigating or scrutinizing and explaining the divine mysteries by reason informed by faith or by faith informed by reason. Instead, it likes to gaze at them with wonder and awe and enter into it with the interior eye of the spirit illumined by the light of faith and read them with the help of the Sacred Scripture. Symbolic theology and typological exegesis of the Sacred Writings is its brand mark. A Syriac theologian 'reflects' with amazement on the given 'sights' and shares his 'reflections' with others. This way is especially protruding in Mar Ivanios' meditative study of the Eucharist and in many of his exhortations to the Bethany nuns. His book *Sabbavatsaram* is a gallery of the Syriac method of symbolic theology and typological exegesis of the Scripture. His written works on the Eucharist and Penance are not 'scientific' treatises. So are, quite naturally, most of the instructions to the nuns. He searches for the spiritual truth and growth. He uses intelligence to search the pearls in the ocean of the holy books on Jesus, making him available to the believers in the mysteries. In a few of the meditative exhortations to the Bethany nuns, in a very limited way he makes use of allegorical application of scriptural images. His typological exegesis of biblical images is an outcome of his

perception of the divine economy of salvation and the history of salvation as well as the pedagogical role of the Sacred Scripture. That method enhances the synchronic vision of the economy of salvation. Mar Ivanios' faith admiration at the divine love is an overarching mark of the works mentioned. His prime purpose is to incite his audience or readership to taste God's infinite love and taste it to one's full satisfaction with a grateful heart, and to co-operate with Christ's Spirit to sanctify every cell of one's being. He reflects and teaches on the mysteries out of his love of and for the Lord, for mankind, for the Church and for her mysteries.

### Didactic

His didactic pedagogy is another remarkable feature of communication either orally or in writing. Mrs. Gibbons, his Irish biographer, quotes an interesting anecdote in connection with one of his early sermons, most of them centered on Gospel themes and the mysteries. I believe it suffices to reproduce it to illustrate his pedagogy in oral communication on the mysteries. 'The small boy of this anecdote himself told the story shortly before his death. He had gone in good time and found standing-room near the platform. The crowd grew tense as the hour for the preacher's coming approached. Punctual to the moment he arrives, makes the Sign of the Cross and begins: "Be not as the ox and the mule that have no understanding." He then showed how rational man should have a goal in life and should strive manfully to reach it, from which point it was easy to lead his listeners to consider the Christian goal – salvation. He pointed out impressively the duty that lay on each one so to direct his life



in thought, word and deed that he might attain to heaven, that he might win salvation. The boy went home in thoughtful mood. Salvation? He must secure his soul's salvation..."<sup>9</sup>

### Question-Answer Procedure

As a kind of didactic method Mar Ivanios liked the question-answer mode of procedure. He has employed it in some of his books. This is how he has composed the first three parts of *Vishudha Qurbâna oru Dhyânapadbanam* (*Holy Eucharist a Meditative Study*). Question-answer mode seems to have been a favoured catechetical pedagogy of that period in his Church. Mar Ivanios extensively made use of this method, as is seen also in his exhortations to the Bethany nuns. This was also a favorite method in Syriac Church of Antioch. Such a method is seen also in the Indian Upanishadic literature, more particularly the *Brihadaranyaka Upanishad*. This has to be seen also along with his commendable attempts for uniting Indian culture and Christianity as well as Christian religious life.

### Western Methods and Terminology

In his illustration of Christ-Church-mysteries as the way of our sanctity and salvation, Mar Ivanios makes recourse also to the typically Western scholastic style of analytical divisions and distinctions and categories. We have a good example of the former in his illustration in one of his exhortations to the Bethany nuns on how Christ gives us holiness. First he poses the question: "How does Christ give us holiness?" Then he proceeds: the Church teaches that

there are three ways for it. And this is the plan of the mystery hidden for ages in God (Eph 3,9). (1)... Christ is the perfect exemplary cause, (2) ... the meritorious cause, and (3) ... the efficient cause of our holiness and salvation.<sup>10</sup> - In some of the exhortations to the nuns his expositions and illustrations are in typical Western Latin terminology.<sup>11</sup> He might have followed this method for the sake of clarifying and underscoring the prominence of Christ's role in our spiritual life.

The notion of 'original sin' as well as the division of sins as 'original' and 'actual,' introduced in the catechetical books published by him, are typically Western Latin, and not belonging to the Oriental Church's understanding of man's sin. The Syriac and its parallel Greek New Testament Rom 5, 12 or the Malankara Church's *Order of the Mystery of Baptism* and her other liturgical texts do not contain the phrase or concept of 'original sin' and eventually later taught by the Trent Council. Certainly Mar Ivanios knew the teachings of the great early Oriental and Eastern Church fathers like Basil, Gregory Nazianzen, Gregory Nyssa, John Chrysostom, Philoxenos of Mabbug, Cyril of Alexandria, Dionysius and Severus of Antioch about Adam's sin and its consequence on his posterity. Some time in the middle of the year 1929 instructing the Bethany nuns on "Jesus Christ is truly Son of Man" Mar Ivanios is reported to have said as follows:

"Like each one of us he also has a soul and a body. God has directly created this soul. This body is taken from a woman. The

9. Margaret Gibbons, *Archbishop Mar Ivanios*, Kottayam, 2002<sup>2</sup> (originally published in Dublin, 1962) 35.

10. Sister Salga's manuscript collection (Sermon 13) from April 29, 1929-April 14, 1933,

11. *Ibid.* Sermon 17 from April 29, 1929-April 14, 1933.

Lord has the intellect to know and the will to choose and decide. The Lord has passions that are having the least disorderliness or weakness—here the word ‘passion’ is used philosophically; not in the sense in ordinary parlance—In the ordinary language ‘passion’ means desire. The Lord’s passions are subject to reason. They move only according to the direction of his will power. The Lord’s human nature is like that of ours except for sin. The Lord has not known sin. Either the ignorance, the error, that is the source of sin or its consequences or sickness have not affected the Lord. The Lord does not have anything that is not befitting his dignity and divinity. ... But he liked to bear our weaknesses in his human life...”<sup>12</sup>

After his full communion with the Catholic Church, Mar Ivanios might have adjusted himself to Western explanation of the doctrine of original sin as a sign of his perfect obedience to the then prevalent official formulation of the Western Church. Further, in the early years of the Malankara Catholic Church since 1930, partly latinized Syro-Malabar priests, trained in Western theology in Latin seminaries, were the chief teachers in the Malankara Catholic Church.

As early as 1923, seven years before his entry into the Catholic communion, Mar Ivanios was cherishing and putting in writing the concepts of the “consecratory words” and the concomitant ‘consecratory moment’ of the Eucharistic liturgy. With regard to this the following statement is self evident: “The

moment the priest says “this is my body,” “this is my blood” in the service of your holy sacrifice that is the holy *Qurbāna* (Eucharist), more speedily than the Sun rays pass through the eon, the heavens are open and the bread and wine become the body and blood having your true soul and divinity...”<sup>13</sup> *Kûdâdâvachanangal* (Consecratory Words) is one of his titles on the rubrics of administering the sacraments. The Syriac Church believes in the consecratory power of the words uttered by Christ in the power of the Holy Spirit. However, the concept of a few consecratory words forming a consecratory formula in the service of a mystery is alien to the Syriac tradition. It may be proper at this point to remember that the anaphoras of Peter, Xystus and Bar Salibi have only the accounts of the institution, but not the very ‘words of consecration.’ Consecration is the actual presence of the work of salvation and not only the consecration of the elements.<sup>14</sup> That the early Church did not view the ‘words of institution’ (later taken as ‘consecratory words’) as reported in the synoptic Gospels essential for a true presentation of the Eucharist, is evident from the fourth Gospel, which is not less Eucharistic than the three others. What we have said about the concept of consecratory words is also true about the concept of the moment of consecration. The Syriac understanding is that the whole celebration of the mystery is a consecratory moment. The whole block of time is consecratory.<sup>15</sup> A consecratory moment that is more consecratory than the others of a celebration

12. *Ibid.*

13. Mar Ivanios, *Qurbāna Oru Padbanam*, Part II: *Viśuddha Samsargam*, 4.

14. *Syriac Dialogue*, 4. 64.

15. *Syriac Dialogue*, 4, 65.



of the mysteries of the Church has no place in the original Syriac understanding of the mysteries. The epiclesis or the so-called consecratory words are only peak expressions of the whole consecratory moment and process. Limiting the consecratory moment to a time of one particular prayer or 'formula' is typically Western, and foreign to the sacramental traditions of the Oriental Churches. Long before his full entry into the Catholic communion Mar Ivanios was familiar with Western terminology of the sacramental theology. He adopted that phraseology that appeared in some way suitable to underline some particular aspect of his teaching on the mysteries. With the phrases quoted in this paragraph, he wanted to drive home and confirm the readership in the faith in the real presence of our Lord Jesus Christ in the bread and wine of the mystery of the Eucharist. He was also familiar with different famous spiritual writers of the Western Catholic Church. He has ample quotations from their writings in his exhortations.

### **Liturgical Texts Unchanged**

However, it must be noted that he kept all the Syriac liturgical texts of the Malankara Church in tact with regard to their theology. The oriental perception of the prominence of the role of the Holy Spirit with the Church and her mysteries is repeatedly reminded in his instructions and writings. While dealing with the Eucharist, he prudently and purposefully kept away from terms like 'transubstantiation,' *the word* of the Western Church to explain the real presence of Jesus Christ in the Eucharistic bread and wine. We may say that he employed the Western Latin terminology to explain the Catholic Orthodox faith contained in the Syriac

liturgical texts of his Malankara Church. So also he did not introduce any Western sacramental discipline, except the use of surplice for serving the Holy Communion to the sick and for hearing confession. In the liturgical celebrations he followed the Antiochene Syriac liturgical tradition.

### **Contextualized Sacramental theology**

Helping people to decode the coded record of the Church's faith and make it a text read for practice in context is the most important function and the most valuable contribution of a faithful and imaginative theologian of the Church. Exactly this is how Mar Ivanios theologized. He was not a non-evocative bookish theologian challenging none for anything. The culminating motif of his speech on the Sacraments is growth and development that the union with Jesus Christ through the reception of the mystery of the holy Eucharist and the other mysteries will bring to the members of the Church individually to the Church as a whole, and to the whole mankind at large. Revival of the community's sacramental life was the main objective of the preaching campaign of his missionary group. It was organized in the context of the spiritual deterioration of his Church on account of the factionalism within the Church. So the campaign had a specific intention of rejuvenating the overall spiritual life of the community. About the method of communication and the net result of the campaign Gibbons writes, "There was also a daily demonstration of the liturgy and a detailed explanation of the significance of its ritual, besides instructions on its doctrinal contents. Apathy fled, and faith and worship revived wherever the missionaries had

---

passed.”<sup>16</sup> At that juncture his Church was just recovering from the confusions owing to the division of the *Reformed Jacobites* (later the Mar Thoma Church) in 1889 but only to head to the excommunication of the Malankara Metropolitan by the Antiochene Jacobite Patriarch Mar Abdallah. Mar Ivanios has given strong and clear expression to his firm faith and conviction that while on the one hand reception of Jesus Christ’s Eucharistic body in the Church, his body, manifests and confirms the Church in her unity as the body of Christ, on the other hand reception of Jesus Christ’s Eucharistic body in the Church, his body, should foster the unity of the Church to still greater extent, and thus to the full visible communion with the Catholic Church. He believed that the Eucharistic celebration is also that of the cosmic unity through Christ. In fact this is symbolized in the Malankara Church’s Eucharistic celebration and it can be properly celebrated, Mar Ivanios believed, only in the full communion of Churches in the leadership of the successor of Peter and the Chief of the Patriarchs in the ancient Apostolic See of Rome. The unity that the Church enjoys with Christ through the celebration of the mysteries must serve the unity of the whole mankind with Christ and through Him with God.

Mar Ivanios theologized by practicing love of God and practiced love of God for theologizing. It may be more proper to say that he communicated the theology he practiced as a *philatheos* (2 Tim 3,4) and wanted to practice the same more ardently and closely. He theologized at length on monastic life in order to live it to the full. To realize it he

preferred to keep away from the immediate context of the unchristian litigations and petty quarrels of the ecclesiastics and chose to settle down on the Bethany Hills in the remote forest area, an immediate helpmate context to strengthen his monastic life. He reflected at length on the Eucharist in order to celebrate and live it more fully. He noted down those reflections in order to help others to make better profit of the mystery of the celebration and participation in the Eucharist. He reflected long on the mystery of Penance and it helped him to grow more and more in God’s love. He put those reflections in writing and it helped others to grow ever more in God’s immense forgiving love while enjoying it in the forgiveness of sins served through the Church. He experienced and enjoyed union with Jesus Christ, the mystery of God-man reunion, in the mysteries of the Church, the mystery of Christ, which union he believed must be manifested in the visible communion of the Churches who serve those mysteries. He was under pains so that everybody else enjoys union with Jesus Christ in the mysteries.

## II. Mar Ivanios’ Perception of the Mysteries

Let us now proceed to a closer inspection of his general understanding of the mysteries, his general sacramental theology. Our discussion in the first part necessarily included summarily recalling his perception and his particular vision of the mysteries. In the present part of the search we try to elucidate his perception of the mysteries first through the terms he used to designate them in general and what he says of them in relation to the

16. Gibbons, *Archbishop Mar Ivanios*, 34



Church and Jesus Christ, and finally the mysteries of the Church in general.

### Terms Used

Let us start with a preliminary note about the number of the mysteries of the Church. The writings and liturgical commentaries of the Syriac writers until Bar Ebraya (+ 1298) demonstrate that the Syriac tradition did not use the number 'seven' for the mysteries up to the 13<sup>th</sup> century. In the Syriac tradition there is no definition of the mysteries. However, centuries before Mar Ivanios, the Syriac Churches had accepted, definitely by the influence of the seven-fold system of Sacraments of the West, the symbolic figure of seven as the norm of the number of the mysteries of the Church. More particularly the 'Synod' of Udayamperur (Diamper) in 1599 imposed the seven-fold system of Sacraments of the Western Church on the whole ancient Church of the Thomas Christians in India. It gave the separated Thomas Christian group (the future Jacobite Syrian Church) an additional occasion to be subsequently confirmed in the seven-fold system as the norm of the number of the mysteries of the Church. In Mar Ivanios' Jacobite (Orthodox) Church also, the contents of the list of the seven mysteries was the same as the present one.

Already from his pre-reunion days Mar Ivanios employed three Malayalam words, namely *qûdâda*, *rahasyam*, and *marmmam* as the corresponding words of the Syriac *raza'* (singular). *Raza'* can mean 'secret,' though in the New Testament it certainly means

'mystery'<sup>17</sup> as we understand it when we use it for the seven mysteries. In the New Testament *raza'* does not mean 'secret' or 'hidden,' for which there is *thašyo'* or *kašyo'*. In two religious contexts, namely in biblical exegesis and in liturgy, *raza'* has a technical sense. In the former it corresponds more or less to 'type' or 'symbol.' Here 'symbol' is understood to have an ontological relation existing between it and the reality it symbolizes. The reality is present in the symbol. In liturgy originally the plural *raze'* was used by the Syriac Churches to describe the Eucharistic mysteries<sup>18</sup>. (It has remained so in the Malankara Church). Both in biblical exegesis and in liturgy *raza'* denotes a visible sign endowed with a "hidden power" (Mar Aprem). In the case of Sacred Scripture and the natural world, the "hidden power" of the *raze'* serves as a vehicle for the manifestation of a divine reality. In the case of the Eucharistic mysteries the "hidden power" of the *raze'* (plural) serves as a means and vehicle for salvation. Later, possibly under the influence of Dionysius the Areopagite (5<sup>th</sup> c.), *raza'* was extended to other liturgical rites performed by ordained priesthood. Among the Indian Syriac Christians *raza'* could denote any of the seven mysteries. In connotations and the range of meaning *raza'* is very much close to the Greek *mysterion*. Therefore the term *mystery*, the English derivative from the *mysterion*, is more often used as the preferred translation of *raza'* also in Syriac Churches. Yet, *raza'* is more comprehensive than *mysterion*. According to Ad-Du-waihi, the term *raza'* "describes best the symbolical reality of God's acts celebrated by the Church in the power

17. Mk 4,11; 1Tim 3,16; Rom 11,25; 16,25; 1Cor 15,51; Eph 5,321.

18. *Syriac Dialogue*, 4. 119.

of the Triune God.”<sup>19</sup> *Qûdâda*, *rahasyam*, and *marmmam* corresponds also to *mysterion*. It appears that Mar Ivanios keeps some kind of subtle distinction between the three terms in their application.

### *Qûdâda*

*Qûdâda* is the Malayalam form of the Syriac *qûdâda*’ and corresponds to Latin *sacramentum*. Literally, deriving from the root *qdš* (= to make holy, dedicate, consecrate), *qûdâda* means hallowing, sanctifying, dedication, consecration, etc. It means also the means of sanctification. In Christian usage it describes the service of sanctifying and consecration by ordained priest. As with *raza*’ in Syriac, the word *qûdâda* is not limited to the seven sacraments. Even today in the ordinary parlance among the Malankarites it is used also to describe the ‘sacramentals.’ Mar Ivanios himself has said, “There are many *qûdâdas*. Generally they are said to be seven”. But he does not consider all *qûdâdas* as mysteries like the seven mysteries of the Church. In the present work we consider Mar Ivanios’ use of *qûdâda* with reference only to the seven mysteries. *Qûdâda* is the term he uses regularly with reference to the mysteries that are popularly known as the ‘sacraments’- the seven mysteries. Sometimes he uses it only for the Eucharistic mysteries. But this usage is not Mar Ivanios’ speciality. Whether for the seven mysteries or for the Eucharist, his preference is *rahasyam* (mystery) / *rahasyangal* (mysteries) to *qûdâda*.

### *Rahasyam*

*Rahasyam* literally means ‘secret,’ and is the Malayalam word corresponding to the Syriac *raza*’ in the sense of ‘secret,’ and the proper

Malayalam word corresponding to the Greek *mysterion*. Mar Ivanios uses *rahasyangal* (plural) for the seven mysteries of the Church, *rahasyam* (singular) for the mysteries of the Eucharist, and for the mystery of Jesus’ incarnation. In the Syriac tradition and in the traditional *qurbâna taksâ* of the Malankara Church the plural *rahasyangal* (mysteries) is the normal expression for the Eucharist. Against this context the indiscriminate use of the singular *rahasyam* by Mar Ivanios for the mysteries of the Eucharist is unexpected. That here his attention is concentrated on the mystery aspect of the Eucharist is clear from the adjacent explanation he gives. He indicates also that the Eucharist is the ‘great *rahasyam*’ (*mabâ rahasyam*) and the ‘new *rahasyam*’ (*putiya rahasyam*).

### *Marmmam*

The primary reference of this Malayalam term is physiological, and it means the most vital part of the body. Applied for concepts or ideas it means the key point, the central secret; and the inner or hidden meaning. The *Puthenkûr* section of the Thomas Christian Church, to which Mar Ivanios belonged, was accustomed to use the word *marmmam* corresponding to the *Pôita* Pauline usage of *raza*’ and the Christian mysteries. The Malayalam translation of the Bible by the Protestant Bible Society confirmed it by translating the Pauline term *mysterion* by *marmmam* (e.g. Eph. 3, 3.4). Mar Ivanios uses *marmmam* in the sense of: i) the central secret (truth), as he says that the central truth of Christianity is not a principle but a person – Jesus Christ, and immediately he adds, “and this is the *marmmam* of Christianity”. Here he evidently means what elsewhere he has

19. *Syriac Dialogue*, 4. 11.



described as the “mystery of incarnation.” ii) In another place he employs *marmmam* for the Christian truth that by means of the holy *qûdâðakal* (sacraments) we live in Jesus Christ, who has ascended into the heaven; that man has a blessed life in Christ. iii) In most cases ‘*marmmam*’ corresponds to the *Pôîta* Pauline usage of *raza’* corresponding to the Greek *mysterion*, namely the *marmmam* of Christ as the way of salvation for the whole humanity, and that Christ, the hope of glory, is in the Gentiles. In Pauline terms Mar Ivanios speaks of the *marmmam* of Christ. Thus *marmmam* describes Jesus Christ. iv) The *marmmam* of our life in Jesus Christ, who has ascended into life, by the *qudashakal* necessarily involves our membership in the Church, Christ’s body that gives humanity the life of the resurrection of Jesus Christ. Church is the mysterious (*marmmarûpamâya*) body of Christ while the Eucharist is the sacramental (*kûdâðaparamâya*) body. This distinction that Mar Ivanios makes is interestingly subtle, because the same Syriac word *raza’* underlies both these Malayalam adjectives. Thus he uses *marmmam* (mystery – *Pôîta* Pauline *raza’*) for the Church, Christ’s body.

Mar Ivanios’ uses three Malayalam words *qûdâða*, *rabasyam*, and *marmmam* corresponding to the Syriac *raza’*. *Raze’* in the plural form is the Syriac Churches’ favorite original Syriac term for the mysteries of the Eucharist, and for the mysteries of the Church in general. Its singular *raza’* is the *Pôîta* Pauline term corresponding to the Greek *mysterion* and in liturgical language it can denote any of the mysteries of the Church. He knows that *qûdâða* could be indiscriminately used for the mysteries of the Church and the para-liturgical services

(sacramentals). But he regularly uses it for the seven mysteries of the Church, and sometimes only for the Eucharist. *Rabasyam* is his preference for the seven mysteries of the Church and particularly for the mysteries of the Eucharist. He uses *marmmam* for different central truths of Christianity, and specifically for the mystery of Christ as the way of salvation for all, which *marmmam* includes also the Church and her mysteries. The underlying original Syriac term is the same for all the three words. The same original theological meaning of the Syriac Church’s perception underlies all of them: namely the mystery of salvation through Jesus Christ, the Church and the mysteries of the Church. Mar Ivanios has inherited and communicated it by the three terms, but with some sort of specification. While he uses *qûdâða* and *rabasyam* for the seven mysteries of the Church and particularly for the Eucharist, *marmmam* is used for Jesus Christ, and the adjective *marmmarûpamâya* is used for the Church. He keeps some distinction between the same *raza’* – *mysterion* of Jesus Christ, of the Church, and of the seven mysteries, more particularly the Eucharist, of the Church. *Qûdâða* and *rabasyam* (the mysteries of the Church) is *raza’* – *mysterion*, but not exactly as Jesus Christ and the Church are. Reserving *marmmam* for Jesus Christ, Mar Ivanios possibly implies His centrality. He is the source *raza’* – *mysterion*. Use of *marmmamaya*, the adjective of *marmmam*, for the Church seems to indicate that the Church is the adjectival *raza’* – *mysterion* of Jesus Christ the *raza’* – *mysterion*. As *raza’* – *mysterion*, the Church is the closest to Jesus Christ the *raza’* – *mysterion*. Jesus Christ *raza’* *mysterion* is the Head and Church *raza’* – *mysterion* is his body. That is what Mar Ivanios means by designating the Church

as the *marmmarūpamaya ḍarīram* (mysterious body) of Jesus Christ.

### Jesus Christ as the Mystery in Mar Ivanios' Perception and Communication

In the previous paragraph we have seen that Mar Ivanios communicates his traditional perception of the *raza'* – *mysterion* of Jesus Christ by *marmmam*, and that he does not use the term *qūdāda* or *rahasyam* for the *raza'* – *mysterion* of Jesus Christ. Mar Ivanios' use of the term *marmmam* for Jesus Christ eminently corresponds to the Pōīta Pauline *raza'* – *mysterion* in Eph 3,3-5. And *marmmam* is inclusive of the *raza'* – *mysterion* communicated by *marmmamāya ḍarīram*, *qūdāda* and *rahasyam*.

In the "12<sup>th</sup> sermon" of Salga's collection of Mar Ivanios' exhortations to the Bethany nuns, from which I have quoted a little above, he said, "the central truth of Christianity is not a principle but a person – Jesus Christ, ... and this is the *marmmam* of Christianity." It is the *marmmam* of Christ. Subsequently in the same sermon he clarifies in Pauline terms this *marmmam* (*raza'* – *mysterion*) of Christ: "that is the Gentiles have become fellow heirs, members of the same body, and sharers in the promise in Christ Jesus ..." (Eph 3,4). "That Christ has become the way of salvation for the whole humanity is the *marmmam* of Christianity." In Pauline terms he exposes its story. It has been hidden for the ages and generations but has been revealed to Paul (Col 1,26; Eph 3,3). And that *marmmam* is that in Christ mankind has the blessed life. Then he passes on from the risen Jesus Christ to the Church, and also to her mysteries, as Paul does in Eph 2,1-3,12.

On some other occasions he explains the said *marmmam* of Christ in different ways. The

question is how Jesus Christ is the way of salvation for the whole humanity. He did it quite systematically drawing the context and consequence of Jesus Christ's incarnation. He describes 'salvation' of mankind' in terms of 'union with God.' Let me summarize as follows his communication of his understanding of the mystery of Jesus Christ: God created the whole creation through the in a state of union with Him. Man is the summit and representative of the whole creation. Adamite sin disrupted the relation between God and the creation. Thence the whole creation has been groaning in travail together until now to get reunited with God. Reunion had to be realized through mankind, the summit and representative of the whole creation. But mankind that is only a creature could not by its own power re-establish the union with God, and that particularly on account of its sinfulness. Therefore God who created everything had to take the initiative. The Word, who was with God, was Son of God, and was God and through whom everything was created, became man and dwelt among us. This is the Son of God's incarnation: Jesus Christ. In him there is perfect union of divinity and humanity. He is perfect God and perfect man. His humanity is sinless. He is the Second Adam without sin. God united Himself with mankind and mankind with God through His Son. God has condescended to give us in Jesus Christ the possibility and the way for union with Him. The humanity of the Second Adam is the way God has given us to unite in divinity. Christ's humanity is the way to his divinity. Christ's divinity touched us, saved us, through his humanity, through his passion, death and resurrection. Jesus Christ having body



(visibility) and soul (invisibility) is the way of our union with God (salvation). We must unite bodily (visibly) and spiritually with soul (invisibly) with Jesus Christ. After His resurrection He touches us through His body, the Church. We get united to Him through the Church. In the Church He touches us and we touch Him through the mysteries of the Church, and through Him we get united with God. Thus both in His and our earthly life and in His and our life of resurrection, Jesus Christ is the way of our salvation.

In the exhortations 10 and 13 of Salga's collection, Mar Ivanios illustrates the same motif of union with God through Jesus Christ in terms of 'our holiness.'<sup>20</sup>

"Christ is the way of salvation for mankind. To become Christ's members, to live, and to become perfect as Christ's members is described as holiness. Christ is the source of all our holiness. This is the way of salvation. This plan of salvation is designated as the mystery of Christ. How does Christ provide us holiness? There are three ways that the Church teaches. This is the plan of the mystery hidden for ages in God (Eph 3,9). 1) Christ is our perfect, the only model of holiness. Christ's holiness is the exemplary cause of our holiness. That is to say, those who desire holiness must learn from and imitate Christ. 2) It is as our Saviour who has made the reparation for our sins and has wrought us redemption that Christ is the cause of our holiness. Christ is the meritorious cause of our holiness. 3) It is Christ who remains in us as the power of God's holiness and acts in us as the source of life and who works in us in the

way that holiness is effective in our soul. That is to say, Christ is the efficient cause of our holiness."

"Christ is the life in our life. Christ is the foundation of all holiness. Christ is the essence of holiness. In Christ we become children of God. We are adopted. As children of God we have supernatural life. The principle – the inner life-power is grace. The fullness of that grace is in Christ. A) Christ is the model of any act we do on account of grace. B) Reparation for our sin was made by Christ's life, passion and death. Thereby Christ has earned grace in him. C) We get this grace because we touch him. When the woman with the flow of blood touched the fringe of the Lord's clothes power went forth from him and healed her. Likewise through the holy mysteries, Christ's grace enters all those who touch Christ with faith. It is in this way that we are filled with holiness..."

This illustration of the three-dimensional provision of Christ's holiness to us is certainly typically western. In the 10<sup>th</sup> Sermon (on "The Source of Holiness") he is reported to have explained thus:

"Jesus Christ is the source of our holiness. We have holiness according to the measure of God's life in us. Jesus Christ is holiness in himself. We are to become holy by receiving holiness from Jesus Christ. In our night prayers we praise Jesus, "You only are holy." It is true. Among those born of woman only in Jesus Christ is God's life to the full. Only in Jesus Christ is God's holiness to the full. ...Our justice is in Christ. Our sanctification is in Christ. Our redemption is in Christ (1Cor 1,30). All

20. Sister Salga's manuscript collection from April 29, 1929-April 14, 1933, 13<sup>th</sup> speech.

our salvation is in Christ. Our forgiveness of sins in Christ... So Christ alone is the way of our salvation. We must be sharers of Christ's holiness. The door of eternal life is open to us in Christ. What is God's plan to save us? God the Father has appointed Christ as the head of a body..."

In continuation of the 13<sup>th</sup> Sermon Salga has reported five more Sermons (14<sup>th</sup> -18<sup>th</sup> Sermons) of Mar Ivanios on 'Christ our Model' They are further illustrations of how Christ our model provides us his holiness. This is how he proceeds in the 14<sup>th</sup> :

"God desires our holiness. Only by participating in God's holiness can we have holiness. We must become God's supernaturally adopted children and must live as the real children of the heavenly Father. 'Therefore, be imitators of God, as beloved children' (Eph 5,1). 'You be perfect as your heavenly Father is perfect' (Mt 5,48). How to become perfect as the heavenly Father? He lives in unapproachable light, whom no one has ever seen, or can see (1Tim 6,16). No one has ever seen God (1 Jn 4,12). How can we become as a person whom we cannot see close and we cannot approach? Paul gives us the answer to this question. God has revealed Himself to us in Christ (2 Cor 4,6). Christ Jesus is the image (visible form) of the invisible God (Col 1,15). 'Christ Jesus is the reflection of God's glory and the very stamp of the principle' (Heb 1,3). That is to say, Christ Jesus is the model that reveals externally the inner nature and holiness. Christ the image of the invisible God is perfectly like his Father. The one who desires to see the Father needs see only the Son. 'He who has seen me has seen the Father.' Our Lord answered to Philip as

he asked to show the Father (Jn 14,7-9). "No one except the Father knows the Son" (Mt 11,27). Therefore no one can know the Father. But any body can know the Father if the Son reveals the Father. There is no way of knowing the Father except through the Son (Mt 11,27). "No one has ever seen God. The Only Begotten Son who is in the bosom of the Father has revealed Him" (Jn 1,18)...

In the 14<sup>th</sup> Sermon he is purely biblical. (He follows the *Pôitā* version). In this sermon he connects our holiness immediately with our adopted sonship. He does the same a little more elaborately in an earlier Sermon(9) also titled "*Rakshâmārgam*" (the way of salvation):

"Jesus the Messiah is the way of salvation for all people. 'I am the way, truth and life.' God has appointed Jesus Christ the Second Adam so that through him God's life is spread in all people. Through Christ God's life overflows to people. Jesus Christ is by nature God's Son. Because by grace we humans are grafted to Jesus Christ through him God's life spreads into us. Christ is God's Son by nature. As for us, we are God's children by grace (Rom 8,29). Jesus Christ is the first born among many children. God preordained that all men (humans) be his brethren. What is the plan of salvation? We become God's children through Jesus Christ (Gal 4,5). We can get sonship. This is the plan of salvation. This is a central principle of Christianity. All of us can get God's life and grace through Jesus Christ. God's life abides in all its fullness (Col 2,10). We who have received sonship are his members. In him we have everything. From his fullness we have received grace upon grace (Jn 1,16). Already before the foundation of the world God thought of us. Loved us. Chose



us. While Christ is God's Son by nature He preordained to make us His children (Rom 8,29). We are children adopted by God (Eph 1,5). God has adopted us as the members of His household. Through Christ God has freely given us by grace the right of adoption. Because we are adopted we have received God's life..."

In continuation of the 14th Sermon in the 15th he elaborates the way of our holiness by imitating Christ. The speaker illustrates that we can imitate the invisible spiritual Father by imitating Christ. We can imitate him because he is visible. He is God become man. He is visible under earthly human form. In the question of our holiness we can imitate Christ, because a) he is the perfect model for us; and b) he is imitable. "Jesus is the model of perfect holiness. He helps us to imitate him and makes imitation possible. Christ's incarnate life showed us the way man must live God's life. Therefore we should look at Jesus Christ with open eyes. We must look with faith. We must look with hope. We must look with love. Then we can see Christ as He is." Then the speaker proceeds to illustrate his point with examples from Jesus Christ's public ministry. Towards the end of this sermon he shifts to Johannine language, especially from 1John:

"Through all the things narrated above Christ has revealed to us God the Father – the inner life, nature and qualities of God. We can know Him proportionate to we love Christ. We shall know the Father proportionate to we know Christ (Jn 14,21). It is in Christ that God has been revealed as He is. God's life has been revealed in Christ. To know God's inner life it is enough that we see Christ's inner life. Apostle John says:

"(God's) life was manifested to us. We saw it. We witnessed it. And we proclaim to you the eternal life that was with God and was revealed to us" (1Jn 1,2). "We heard, saw with our own very eyes, looked, and touched with our very hands Christ the Word of life, the one from the beginning" (1Jn 1,1). God appeared to us in Christ. We have communion with God the Father and with Jesus Christ His Son (1Jn 1,3). We desire that you also have this communion. So we preach the gospel to you (Jn 1,3)".

In 16<sup>th</sup>-18<sup>th</sup> Sermons Mar Ivanios illustrates in typical western terminology how God the Word become man is model to us by his person and by his works. However amidst it he inserts the biblical theme of our adopted sonship, already elaborated in his 9<sup>th</sup> Sermon for depicting Christ our perfect and imitable model as our elder brother. "God the Word who became man is Son of God. By the grace we receive through him, we become children of God. He means that we receive the holiness of the Son of God whereby we also become children of God" (16<sup>th</sup> Sermon). "Christ is truly Son of man. He is perfectly man. So with bodily eyes people could see him. Human hands touched him (1Jn 1,1). He was Son of man while he was Son of God. By seeing and touching him also at his post-resurrection status, we, while being children of men, could be children of God. We have likeness with Christ. The sanctifying grace in us is the fundamental sign of our likeness with Christ. By the sanctifying grace we are Christ's brethren and co-heirs with him" (17<sup>th</sup> sermon). Because he was perfect man he acted like perfect man. Thereby he is our accessible model of perfect holiness" (18<sup>th</sup> sermon).

---

In short, the *marmmam* (*raza'* – mystery – sacrament) of Jesus Christ is that he is *the way of salvation* for the whole mankind and thereby for the whole universe. Jesus Christ's theandric existence is the perfect realization of the union of God and man. Through him God reached mankind and mankind reached God. His visibility (humanity) is the way for mankind towards his invisibility (divinity). Jesus Christ's *marmmam* is that his incarnate body in its natural and glorified statuses is the way of salvation for the whole mankind and thereby for the whole universe. In his post-resurrection status his visibility and invisibility is continued through the Church, Christ's body, whose invisible head is Christ. In the Church union with him, and through him with God, is realized through her mysteries. Mar Ivanios explains the *marmmam* (*raza'* – mystery – sacrament) of Jesus Christ also in terms of 'holiness.' God is holiness. Jesus Christ is the source of holiness for us. Through Jesus we are given holiness. Salvation through Jesus Christ means also gift of Jesus' sonship to us. Through Jesus Christ, God adopts us as his children. We are made co-heirs of the household of God with Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ as our elder brother and perfect man is our imitable perfect model, by imitating whom we can certainly attain the salvation God has made available to us. God speaks to us through the Church.

### Church the Mystery of Christ

The essence of his thought on the Church as the mystery of Christ is this: in the post-resurrection period, the Church as the body of the glorified Lord Jesus Christ is the way for union with him, who is the sole way of union with God.

### Church the 'Mysterious Body' (*Marmmarûpamâya šarîram*)

Mar Ivanios describes the Church as Christ's 'mysterious body' (*marmmarûpamâya šarîram*). He does not use the words *qûdâda* or *rahasyam* in his description of the 'body,' the Church. He employs the adjective *marmmarûpamâya* (= mysterious) to qualify the 'body' the Church. Thereby he conveys that the Church is the mystery (*the qûdâda* or *rahasyam* = the sacrament or mystery) of Christ. In the Church people can have saving contact with Jesus Christ. Thus the central point of the mystery (sacramentality) of the Church is her role in the mystery of salvation fulfilled in Jesus Christ. Mar Ivanios teaches: "The Church is the continuation of the incarnation..." Our Lord established his Church here on earth in order to continue his work of glorifying God and receiving and saving all people. It implies primarily the union of Jesus Christ and the Church. It implies also that he continues glorifying God and saving all people through the Church. The Church herself functions as the way for the continuation of the salvation fulfilled in Jesus Christ. The Christian believers from the beginning perceived the "great mystery" of the union of Christ and the Church (Eph.5,31-32). The Church is perceived and presented as the proclamation and the presence of the salvation fulfilled in Jesus Christ. And the union of the whole mankind ("Gentiles made co-heirs with Jews"), the eternal plan of God, fulfilled in the mystery of Christ is realized in the Church. The 'economy of our Saviour Jesus Christ' (*mdabronuto' dporuko' dilan yešun' mšibo'*) takes effect in the Church through her ministry, more especially that of the word and



her mysteries. "The holy Church has arranged the *marmmam* of the incarnated life of our Lord Jesus Christ in the Christian liturgical year for the spiritual growth of the children, namely the members, of the Church. The Church is the body of the risen Lord Jesus Christ that gives people the life of Christ's resurrection. As a follower of the Syriac tradition, Mar Ivanios is very much fond of presenting the Church as Jesus Christ's body and bride. The Christian tradition from its very beginning describes and illustrates in many images the mystery of the unity of Christ and the Church and of her salvific ministry. Thus the Church is Christ's bride (Eph. 5, 25-29), Christ's flock (Mk 13, 27; Jn 10), Christ's body (1 Cor. 12), God's temple, God's field, God's house (1 Cor. 3, 16-17) *et cetera*. The Syriac tradition carried forward these and many other biblical images, with a certain preference to the 'body' and 'bride' images, to illustrate the Church and her salvific role. The multitude of such images witnesses the Syriac Church's consciousness that the mystery of the Church is at the same time revealed, but inexhaustible by descriptions and illustrations. For the Syriac Christianity the Church is a mystery that is lived and celebrated. In her liturgical celebrations the Church celebrates herself. Simultaneously she witnesses, participates in and witnesses to the saving events commemorated. By this complexity of the paradoxes of the Church's reality, in her liturgical celebrations she remains a lived experience for her children.

Being faithful to the Syriac tradition, Mar Ivanios describes the Church as Christ's 'mysterious body' (*marmmarûpamâya ðarîram*). By way of an aside, it may be noted that

*marmmarûpamâya ðarîram* does not mean 'mystical body,' a Western formulation with juridical implications, though elsewhere Mar Ivanios uses 'mystical body' for the Church. But by using only *marmmarûpamâya* for the Church he indicates that the Church is not one of the seven mysteries / *qûdâðakal* or *rabasyangal*. It implies also that the celebration of the economy of salvation performed in the concrete context of the seven liturgical celebrations is mysteries but not exactly as the Church is the mystery of Christ. The Church, as the body of Christ the head, and as his bride, is the mystery of Christ in a unique way with the closest identification. The seven mysteries are "of the Church," Christ's *marmmarûpamâya ðarîram*, specifies Mar Ivanios.

Regarding the relation of a sort of identification between Jesus Christ and the Church Mar Ivanios is reported to have instructed the Bethany nuns as follows:

"Jesus Christ is God become man. He has the fullness of divinity and the fullness of humanity. But his humanity does not have *qnoma* (person). His divinity and humanity are united in God the Son, his *qnoma*. In the same way the Church, his *marmmarûpamâya ðarîram* (mysterious body) does not have *qnoma*. Jesus Christ is the *qnoma* of the Church. The parable of the leaven well illustrates the way Christ Jesus is spread in the whole Church. Just as the leaven spreads all through the dough. Jesus Christ lives in the whole Church and makes her his body."<sup>21</sup>

Mar Ivanios' distinction of the four statuses of Jesus Christ's body sheds further light on the specificity of the 'identification'

21. *Ibid.* from April 29, 1929-April 14, 1933; Instruction of November 6, 1930.

between him and the Church. There are four statuses of his body: 1) the incarnated natural body; 2) the glorified body; 3) the same body in the Eucharist, namely the sacramental body that we receive in the Eucharist (*qūdāḏaparamāya rūpatbil varunna ḏarīram*); and 4) the mysterious body (*marmmarupamaya sharīram*), which is the receptacle of the third status of Jesus Christ's body.<sup>22</sup>

In the post-resurrection period Christ abides in us with his glorified body, which now lives and has grown as the Church in the world. The Church is the mystery (the way and reality) of Christ. Mystery in Christian tradition contains visible and invisible realities. The Christian Church is the visibility of the invisible Christ. As the Malankara Church sings in the First Hour of her Sunday vigil of the liturgical season of resurrection,

"The king of the heaven and the earth  
Built the Church  
And made it his seat  
He entered in and abides in it.  
Whosoever would speak to him  
Let him enter in the Church."

This hymn celebrates the mystery that the Church is Christ's mystery. So now it is through the Christian Church that we are united with him. Acceptance of the mystery (sacramentality) of Jesus Christ involves the necessity of accepting the Church the way and reality (mystery, sacrament) of Christ-man unity. Therefore one who lives as a true Christian, a true devotee of Christ, is the one who grows in him tasting him more than ever before and abiding in the God-given Church

of Christ. The Church is God's tongue. God speaks to us through the Church. During Jesus' earthly ministry God asked people to listen to Jesus (Mk 9,7). And after Jesus' resurrection the Church, with whom the risen Jesus the Lord is, is to be listened to (Mt 28,18-20; 18,17-20). The Church as the fulfillment of Israel, and therefore as the true Israel, is the way of the mystery of Christ for the non-Jews too. Thus the true Israel character of the Church also speaks out her the mystery of Christ.

### **Mysteries of the Church – Way for Unity with Christ**

Mar Ivanios teaches that the mysteries are the ways that Christ himself, the *way* of God-man communion, has by his paschal mystery instituted for mankind in order to get united with him in the Church, his *bride* / *his mysterious body*. Mysteries bring union with Jesus Christ in the Church. This explanation is different from the then dominant Western (Tridentine) teaching that 'the sacraments are the visible signs that give us invisible grace.' The phrase 'invisible grace' here is vague. Also the modern Western description of the sacraments as 'encounter with Christ' does not apparently convey the aspect of union with Christ in the Church. It is true that the explanation of the mysteries as the ways of union with Christ in the Church does not essentially differ from the Western tradition in the basic understanding of the underlying meaning and theological content of the various mysteries. Nor is 'grace' (*thaibūta*) unfamiliar to the Syriac tradition and Mar Ivanios. Already before his full communion with the Catholic Church he

22. *Ibid.* of 1930 September in the ashram chapel.



taught that we have received *grace* from God. But Mar Ivanios, faithful to the West Syriac tradition, is very particular about the aspect of personal relation with Christ that is given to the recipient through the mysteries in the Church. "Christ lives in us through the Sacraments, through the Eucharist, Baptism, the sacrament of Penance..." And "through the sacraments we live in the Christ ascended into the heaven." He found the relation of the recipient of the mysteries with the Church and the growth of the Church also very important. Insistence on the union with Jesus Christ is significant because in this period of fulfillment of God's salvific plan Jesus Christ is the perfect union of God and man on earth, and it is through him that God's saving grace is given in full to man (Jn 1,14) and man gets united with God. 'Grace' given in the mysteries is not an indefinite 'something.' It is the grace of getting united with the person of Jesus Christ. In fact Jesus Christ himself is the grace. This explanation is very important from the anthropological-Christology of the West Syriac tradition. The fathers of this tradition insist that the fallen nature of human beings has caused Christ to incarnate and to save the humanity.

### Origin of the Mysteries of the Church from Christ's Heart (=Side)

*"This river that has flown from Christ's holy heart – the river that carries and flows – must flow into your soul. Therefore you must construct channels into your soul. These channels are the holy qudashas (sacraments)."* This is the second citation in the initial paragraph of the present work from Mar Ivanios about the mysteries of the

Church. The first sentence passionately describes the origin of the mysteries from Christ's pierced side — a motif very dear to the Syriac sacramental theology. Elsewhere he repeats the same: *"Remember that the power of the holy qūdāḏakal (= sacraments) of the Church is on account of the source from which they originate. They all are effective because they originate from the Lord's side."*<sup>23</sup> Mar Ivanios is a 'heart specialist.' Very often in his writings and speeches he brings in this image. When he speaks of the heart of Christ he means his pierced side. The second sentence of the citation insists on the co-operation from the part of man to receive the mysteries of the Church.

### The Mysteries of the Church are Not Miracles

The mysteries are signs, not miracles, insists Mar Ivanios: "When (Jesus) made the bread the holy body and wine the holy blood, he was not doing a miracle. The bread did not get the taste or other qualities of flesh. Nor did the wine get the taste and other qualities of blood. He made by grace the holy body and the holy blood. Here the Lord did not work a miracle. He worked a *qūdāḏa* (sacrament). And he asked to perform it ... in the Church (Lk 22:19)." This is a very significant position having great relevance for the present when a big number of 'pious souls' are made to become fond of seeing and propagating the appearance of 'bleeding flesh' of the mystery of the Eucharist!

### Mysteries and Tradition

The historical precedence of the Church and her mysteries over the New Testament is

23. Mar Ivanios, *Viṣuddha Kumpasāram*, 11.

another important emphasis of Mar Ivanios' sacramental theology. The mysteries of the Church belong to her earliest Tradition. Even before the New Testament books were written, the Church was living the mysteries. Thus he pays much attention to the relation between the Church's lived and living Tradition and her mysteries.

### **Mysteries and Unity of the Churches**

Finally, I must conclude this article with a few words on his perception of the mysteries of the Church as the way for the re-union of the Churches. He holds, as indicated earlier in this article, the reunion with God through Christ by the mysteries of the Church must

necessarily lead to the full unity of the Churches that celebrate them. Mar Ivanios' perception of the mysteries of the Church, especially the Eucharist, is a challenge to live the organic unity of the one body of Christ. About baptism he is reported to have instructed thus: "Baptism is not of any particular Church." It involves the fundamental unity of all those who receive Christian baptism, and the call for the manifestation of the unity of the Church of Christ into which men and women are received by the sacrament of baptism. So he esteems the entry into the Catholic Church as the fulfillment of all graces received up to then.



# CHURCH AND MISSION AND THE MALANKARA COMMUNITY

*Philip Chempakassery*

## Introduction

In the following pages it will be argued that the missionary dimension of the Christian Church is an essential element in determining the very identity of the Church. (1) In the first part, the teachings of the New Testament on mission will be used as the basic concepts to start with. Then the history of the Church Universal will be looked at from the missionary perspective and the official teachings of the recent Popes will be examined and shown to be fully in agreement with the revelation and the tradition of the Church. (2) In the second part the history of the ancient Church in India, especially that section of the Indian Church which is known as Malankara Church will be examined from the missionary perspective.

## I. THE CHURCH AND MISSION

The Christian Church is both the product of missionary activities and the holder of a very clear mission mandate. What is the Church? The Church may simply be defined as the congregation of the disciples of Jesus Christ. This is the picture of the Church in the New Testament. Jesus, after his baptism in Jordan and long days of prayer in the wilderness, goes out and announces the Good News beginning with Galilee. Those who followed his call became his disciples and they

constituted the Church in its beginning stage. It is noteworthy to see the change in the terminology from the singular to the plural as we examine the stages of growth of the Church. In the beginning it is Jesus single-handed who preaches the Good News. As Mark reports, "Now after John was arrested, Jesus came to Galilee proclaiming the Good News of God and saying "The time is fulfilled ..." (1:14-15). Then about gathering the disciples around him, the same Evangelist says, "As Jesus passed along the Sea of Galilee, **he** saw Simon (1:16ff). Everywhere it is the singular. But after gaining the first four disciples, Mark switches over to the plural: "They went to Capernaum... (1:21). But still the movement of Jesus is not a group movement. It is Jesus alone who preaches and works miracles. Till 6:7 this situation continues. Though he had his disciples with him, they are entrusted with the care of the material things like ordering the crowd. No authority to preach the Gospel is given to them. Rather they are only trained for the mission. This picture of the beginning stage of the Jesus movement is clearly shown in Luke 8:1-3. "Soon thereafter, he went on through cities and villages proclaiming and bringing the Good News of the Kingdom of God. The twelve were with him as well as some women who had been cured of evil spirits and infirmities...."

---

This picture of the Jesus-movement gives us a clear idea about the authorities of the different members. The group is still not capable of preaching the Good News. It is only Jesus who does it. But the twelve are with Jesus. What is their role in this movement? Nothing is said. From the context it seems that they were **with Jesus** for receiving training in the mission. From Mark 3:14 our interpretation is confirmed. Jesus appoints the twelve "to be with him" and then "to be sent out..." This means they have to spend a period of being with Jesus before being sent out to preach. It is this **being with** that is meant by Luke when he says, "the twelve were with him" (8:1). Even when they are sent out to preach, Jesus does not stop his mission of preaching. They are sent out to preach only with the intention of preparing the way for Jesus. The mission of the disciples is to be completed with the mission of Jesus. About the mission of the disciples, Luke says that Jesus "sent them on ahead of him in pairs of every town and place where he himself intended to go" (10:1). In this stage of the missionary role of disciples there is no total handing over of the duty. The disciples have only a partial authority their word is not the final word. Their word is to be perfected with the word of the master.

But the situation changes with the death and resurrection of Jesus. The risen Lord sent the Apostles with full authority. Their mission and Jesus' mission are not different as they had been earlier. Jesus does not speak, after the disciples had spoken and prepared the way for Jesus. Rather Jesus speaks in and through the disciples. In the words of the disciples, the world hears not their word as such but

the words of Jesus. Likewise their authority is not different from the authority of Jesus; rather they exercise the very same authority, the risen Lord has acquired through his ontological oneness with the Father and his mission to the world which he fulfilled through his death and resurrection. Mathew is very clear about the changes that take place in the mission of Jesus and of the Apostles with the resurrection of Jesus: "And Jesus came and said to them: All authority in heaven and on the earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age (28:18-20). Here the mission of Jesus and that of the disciples merge into each other to the effect that the mission of the disciples become the mission of Jesus and vice versa.

What happens in the history of the nascent Church after Pentecost? The theologian in Luke depicts the Church in a unique way as the spreading of the word. There are three important verses in Acts, which points to his theology of the Church. They are Acts 6:7; 12:24 and 19:20

Acts 6:7 reads, "The word of God *increased (euxanē)*; the number of the disciples *multiplied* greatly in Jerusalem, and a great many of the disciples became obedient to the faith". The context shows that Luke is speaking about the growth of the Church. But the expression for Church is "the word of God" (*logos tou theou*). This word is said to have increased. Luke's expression for increase is *auxano*, which occurs mainly in the context of the growth



of the Church, in the Acts(6; 7; 12:24; 19:20). *Auxano* means any type of growth. The word is used in the New Testament especially to speak of the growth of plants and trees (cf. Mt 6:28; 13:32; Mk 4:8; Lk12: 27; 13:19). Anyway Luke identifies the Church with the word, and the growth of the Church is expressed by saying that the word grew or increased. In this connection Acts 6:7 is especially noteworthy. Here Luke uses the growth of the word in synonymous parallelism with the increase in the number of faithful:

*The word of God grew;*

*The number of the disciples increased greatly in Israel.*

From the parallelism it is clear that Luke understands the Church as identical with the word and the growth of the word means increase in the number of the disciples.

Now coming to the conclusion of the foregoing considerations we can sum up our findings in the following way. Receiving inspirations from the Gospel according to John and putting the ideas we have seen so far, we can say the following about the Church and mission as given in the New Testament. Jesus is the word of God, the word of God's Gospel spoken to man. In this incarnation, this message, the word spoken to the humans took the form of a man. The word is the word of the Gospel, the word which tells humans that in God they have salvation, that this salvation is mediated through the person of the man Jesus of Nazareth. In other words, in the incarnation of Jesus, the Church – the means of salvation for the world – was confined and centralized in the person of Jesus. From here, i.e. from the person of Jesus, the

Gospel is proclaimed to the world, beginning with Galilee. Thus there is increase in the Church in the sense that Jesus the embodiment of the Church has a group of disciples around him. Yet it is not an increase in the proper sense. It is only an extension of the external aspect of the Church because the authentic and authoritative word-mission-comes only from Jesus. The disciples are trained for the mission, but that training was not missioning proper. With the death and resurrection of Jesus there is a revolutionary change in the Church and the mission. The group of disciples becomes the missionaries. They are the Church sent out to the world. Their authority is not subordinate to the authority of Jesus; rather they exercise the same authority as Jesus because Jesus is not simply the master, but the indwelling presence. There is a sort of identification between Jesus and the disciples. There is also identification between Jesus' mission and the mission of the disciples. The disciples constitute the Church and this is a Church that is sent out to the Nations. Ecclesiality and mission becomes almost identical concepts. This sent-out Church receives the qualification as the *word of God* in the theology of Luke. It is the word of God because it is a group of people who are sent out to the nations with the Gospel of the Lord.

The importance of the mission is clear also from the letters of Paul. We do not attempt an analysis of the theology of Paul in this section. Yet a word will be in place. The Christian call is a call to receive the Gospel and to be sent out with the message of the Gospel. That is why Paul speaks about his own **bounden-ness** to the Gospel in the

words, "if I proclaim the gospel, this gives me no ground for boasting. For an obligation is laid on me and woe to me if I do not proclaim the Gospel" (1Cor.9:6). That is why "Paul always connects his call to be a follower of the Lord with his reception of the Gospel and his mission to the gentiles. Being Christian means being at the service of the Church. For Paul it means proclaiming the word and establishing new faith communities"<sup>1</sup>.

From the forgoing considerations it is now clear that being a Church and being sent out are almost synonymous to each other. The Church is the result of the mission, which was started in the very inner life of the Trinity. The Son was sent out with the mission of proclaiming the Gospel of Salvation. This Son with the mission is incarnate in the person of Jesus of Nazareth. He established the Church by proclaiming the Gospel. The Church is constituted by gathering disciples from the nations, disciples who are reborn by the message of the Gospel. The Church is also sent out to the nations as the word spreads to the nook and corner of the world. The Church also grows into a full-fledged community that belongs to God. The mission is not something given as a duty to the Church; rather it is something that *touches the very nature of the Church. It is impossible to think about the Church except in terms of the mission.* The mission is the lifeblood that flows through the veins of the Church.

The same truth is clearly taught in the official documents of the Church of the recent

years. In 1926 Pius XI in his Encyclical *Rerum Ecclesiae* said, "our obligation of love towards God demands that we labor to the utmost not only to increase the number of those who know and adore him in spirit and in truth (Jn:4:24), but also to bring as many as possible under our savior's sweet yoke. Thus will "the profit in his blood" (cf. Ps. 30 (29)) become daily more fruitful"<sup>2</sup>. In 1957, Pius XII in his Encyclical *Fidei Donum* associates the ecclesiality with the missionary obligation as if they are two sides of the same coin. The Pope says, "The missionary spirit and the Catholic spirit...are one and the same thing. To be Catholic is the Church's principal distinguishing mark. Hence the individual can scarcely be called a Christian and a member of the Church if he is not at the same time a devoted fellow member of the *whole body of the faithful, desiring the Church to strike her roots and flourish everywhere on earth*"<sup>3</sup>.

The Second Vatican Council, has still clarified the missionary obligation of the Church. According to the Council it is the Holy Spirit, who is the impelling force of the mission. The Council says: "It is the Holy Spirit who impels the Church to do her part in bringing about the full realization of God's plan, by which she has been established as the source of salvation for the whole world<sup>4</sup>. Being conscious of the missionary obligation, the Council goes to the extent of saying that the Church is missionary by its very nature<sup>5</sup>.

Some say that there is a paralyzing effect on the missionary enterprise of the Church

<sup>1</sup> H. Doohan, *Paul's Vision of Church*, Wilmington, 1989, p. 191

<sup>2</sup> J. Neuner and J. Dupuis, *The Christian Faith*, Bangalore, 1973, p. 298.

<sup>3</sup> J. Neuner and J. Dupuis, *op.cit.* p. 305

<sup>4</sup> J. Neuner and J. Dupuis, *op. cit.* p. 310

<sup>5</sup> Cf. *Lumen Gentium*, no. 1



after Vatican II. It may be because of a new awareness about the Church universal and the salvific meaning and value of other religions. But this new situation is only a lull in the particular form of the missionary enterprise of the Church as practiced in the middle ages down to the twentieth century. But this lull means, on the other hand, a revival of other forms of the missionary activities of the Church undertaken not under the leadership of the Western world but maintained and advanced by the local Churches themselves. The change is only in the form of the mission and not of the mission itself. As L.L. Wostyn puts it, "We now witness how the local Churches of the South and the East take up their rightful places and start their own missionary outreach. We are moving towards the twenty-first century in which the Pacific will be the economic and political center of gravity of the world. Hopefully, the local Churches, especially of Asia, will be allowed to witness for Christ within this new situation which is unfolding".<sup>6</sup>

Now can we understand the sign of the life of the Church in the internal reformation of the Church? It is true that the Church to be alive has to be ever being reformed and made relevant to the needs and demands of the times. She has also to be alive by keeping the Holy Spirit always active. The spiritual renewal is not just a duty of the Church but the mandate that can never be forgotten. The first word spoken by the Saviour to the world is "The time is fulfilled, the Kingdom of God is at hand; repent and believe..."<sup>9</sup> (cf. Mk.1:15). But the reformation cannot be

confined to the internal life of the Church. The reformation has an external aspect; it was to be seen also in the external extension of the Church. In other words, the internal reformation has to go hand in hand with the mission of the Church. This is what history has taught us. Michael Richards says about the inter-connectedness of the internal reform and the mission: "Reformation and mission are inseparable from one another. The Church needs to look beyond itself, if its members are to undergo reformation. As soon as reformation becomes an inward looking process, concerned only with correcting the internal life of the Church, something goes wrong. During the period from the tenth to the fourteenth centuries, when there was very little geographical expansion, there was a danger that the Church institution might become a closed corporation, taking charge of the whole of human life. Christendom tended to become a single unit, with the Church ruling everything; or else the Empire reacted, wanting it to be in overall control, with the Church as a corporation contained within it and subordinate to it."<sup>7</sup>

It is now clear that the official teaching of the Church about the missionary obligation is fully in agreement with what we learn from the New Testament. To be the Church means to be missionary, to be sent out to the nations with the Gospel of salvation. If a group of people fails to fulfill this basic obligation, which touches the very nature of Ecclesiality, that group of people has no right to be called a church. Because by nature the Church is missionary. The mission is sign not only of

<sup>6</sup> L.L. Wostyn, *Doing Ecclesiology. Church and Mission Today*, Quezon City, 1990, p. 17.

<sup>7</sup> M. Richards, *The Church of Christ*, Middlegreen, 1982, 121

the growth of the Church but the sign of the very life of the Church. Mission is the external extension of the heartbeat of a living Church. Any community that fails to fulfill this obligation forfeits its right to be called the Church of God because God's Church is missionary by nature. All other things in the Church, all the good things, about which one can be proud of in the Church, are all subordinate to the primacy of the Word. M. Richards puts it: "Recognizing the cultural or moral significance and value of Christianity and recommending it accordingly is not at all the same thing as acknowledging the primacy of the Word and recognizing that all scholarship directed to understanding and expounding the Christian religion must be subordinate to it as to a living principle within a contemporary community"<sup>8</sup>. The liturgy is important as the living expression of a faithful community in constant communion with God. The more lively the liturgy, the more powerful it becomes as a medium for keeping the ties between people intact and for preserving the social nature of the Church. But it is no substitute for the basic need to preach the Gospel to all the nations of the world, because "A Church whose worship does not send it out in joyous proclamation had best reconsider its worship."<sup>9</sup>

## II. A GLIMPSE INTO THE HISTORY OF THE MALANKARA COMMUNITY

The history of the Christian Church of St. Thomas up to the period of the Portuguese arrival is anything but clear. The relation of

the Church with the Persian Church and the hierarchical structures of the Church and the liturgical life of the community, the relationship with other communities of the locality and missionary activity are all shrouded in mystery. All that we can say with a certain amount of certainty is that there was a strong Christian community in Kerala with East Syriac liturgical tradition and apostolic origin from St. Thomas, the apostle of Jesus. The arrival of Portuguese missionaries brought about revolutionary changes in the life of the Church. The missionary activities were systematized and enhanced; new communities were added to the fold of the Church. Though the presence and activities of the Portuguese in the Kerala Church had its negative impact on the age old indigenous traditions of the Church, the missionary activities of the Church was developed and systemized with their arrival. Whatever be the negative impact of the Portuguese, one thing is sure that the Christian community in Kerala became a Church in the real sense of the word. The Kerala Church became a missionary Church. It is a new stage in the growth of the Church in India. No Church is a true Church without the missionary spirit, because the Church is missionary by its nature and has to be such.

The dissention and division that started with the Coonan Cross Oath (1653) separated a section of the Church away from the mainstream Church, which consisted of the majority. What happened to the minority which eventually lost full and visible communion with the Bishop of Rome? These people who were known later as the new

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.* p. 82.

<sup>9</sup> D.L. Carmody and J.T. Carmody, *Bonded in Christ's Love. An Introduction to Ecclesiology*, New York, 1986, p. 170.



allegiance group (*Puthenkur*) was ever since trying to establish themselves as a Church under a legitimate hierarchical head. They contacted the Patriarchs of the different Eastern Churches and a certain Bishop Gregorios of Jerusalem belonging to the Jacobite Syriac Church of Antioch came here. By 1876 the *Puthenkur* community became part of the Jacobite Syriac Church. In modern times we may call this community a *Metropolitan Church*, a Christian community under the leadership of a Metropolitan. More or less the same was the hierarchical status of the majority, which stood with Rome. They also had only a metropolitan rank from the perspective of Church governance. But if we look at these two communities from the perspective of the Christian mission we cannot fail to see the vast difference that separates these two communities.

What was the missionary endeavor or the Pre-Coonan Cross Oath Church of Kerala? History is desperately unclear about this period. The probability is that after St. Thomas and the establishment of the Christian community in the mainstream Kerala society, this community was reduced in later centuries to one of the castes in the area. The faith in Christ was preserved. In all probability, the first converts to Christianity through the preaching of St. Thomas were Jews. The Christian community as it developed was a mixture of Jews, Dravidians, West Asian migrants and others. It was a casteless community. Caste system had its origin in Kerala with the migration of the Arians in later centuries. With this new stratification of the society, the Christian had to fall in line with one or other caste communities in the society.

Since the Christians enjoyed some sort of superior rank in the society, may be also because of the fact that trade and commerce were regulated by some of the leading members of the Christian community,<sup>10</sup> they enjoyed a status similar to that of the high caste Hindus. But we cannot assess their contribution to the Christian mission. It seems that the Christians had a peaceful co-existence with the predominant Hindu population. No records of strife and struggle pertaining to the early centuries of the Christian era are available. This means that the Christians had a good relationship with their Hindu neighbors. But regarding the witnessing to the faith and its proclamation to the people of other religions, we do not have at present details. Probably not much was done. We cannot say nothing was done. We cannot simply condemn our forefathers. We should remember that in Asia, especially in India, there was no Constantine(+337), or Justinian(+565) or Charlemagne (+814) to protect the Church. The contribution of these three great men cannot be ignored in the mission of the Western Church. The number of Christians in Kerala today points to this conclusion. According to the tradition, St. Thomas who came to Kerala in the year 52 established seven Churches or Christian communities. Today the original Thomas Christians and all the other newly converted Christians together constitute less than 25 % of the total population of Kerala. We can identify many reasons for the absence of a missionary thrust on the part of the people converted by St. Thomas.

In a society, where the caste system prevailed, the Christian community had to cope up with the demands of the majority Hindus who had

the final say in the affairs of the society. Then there could have been the superiority feeling coming from the caste identification. In all probability, the Christians enjoyed a status similar to that of the high - class. Together with this caste identification there was the practice of untouchability. This was a strong hindrance against any effective witnessing to the faith in front of other communities. No missionary activity was possible before the high- castes because they dominated the social affairs of the country. The concern of the Christian community was to preserve their social status intact and to be on a par with their Hindu counter parts. The same way no effective witnessing in front of the lower class was possible because of the untouchability, prevalent in the land<sup>11</sup>. The technical name of this community from a caste perspective was *mapila*, (the nobles)<sup>12</sup>. We have some evidence from the time of the Udayamperur Synod which asks the Christians to accommodate the people, converted from low caste Hindus as a result of the Portuguese missionary activities in their Churches till separate churches were built for them<sup>13</sup>.

### After the Division

What was the situation of the Church after the division into those keeping allegiance with Rome (the Pazhayakur) and those not in full communion with Rome (the Puthenkur)? From the missionary point of view the relationship with the Portuguese was a boost

to the mission. The Latin Church and the liturgical traditions were introduced in the Kerala Catholic Community. The history of the Latin community and the ancient Thomas Christian community with Rome was very much intermingled. The Catholic community could keep its ecclesial identity as a living Church which reaches out to the outside communities. By the beginning of the seventeenth century the Carmelite mission was started and missionary obligation of the Church was taken care of. But such missionary activities added the membership of the Latin Church in India. These new missionary enterprise also helped to form new Christian communities outside Kerala. The situation in the nineteenth century was not at all conducive to missionary activities within Kerala because the Catholic faction had lost its social status because of the lack of formal education. In an appeal made by the Syriac Catholic population to the Papal representative we read as follows,

“The want of a bishop in our own nation and rite is the cause of our deterioration in the ecclesiastical and social affairs than our Jacobite brethren who having Bishops of their own nation and having been encouraged by them, not only pass the university examinations but also hold high and responsible offices in the Government and so the Catholics being in contrast to their Jacobite brethren are undervalued by the Hindus as a set of ignorant ...”<sup>14</sup>.

<sup>10</sup> cf. P.J. Podipara, *The Thomas Christians*, Bombay, 1970, pp.79-100.

<sup>11</sup> cf. P.J. Podipara, *op.cit.* p. 83.

<sup>12</sup> cf. P.J. Podipara, *op. cit.* p. 85

<sup>13</sup> cf. G. Varghese, *Malankara Nazranikalude Jatyaulkristyayum Rajasevananiratayum*, Madras, 1987, p. 69

<sup>14</sup> Father Antony, “The Contribution of CMI Fathers to Education”: Fr. Gabriel (ed), In *Remembrance of Things Past*, Iringalakuda, 1974, p 12.



After the independence of India, the Syro-Malabar Christians have undertaken great missionary tasks and they go to all parts of India to preach the gospel. Their contribution for the Indian Church in all its mission areas is a fact that can never be deleted from history. In that way, in spite of social changes and adverse situations the Catholic Thomas Christians remained a Church in the true sense.

### **The Malankara Puthenkur Community and mission**

The history of the Puthenkur community after the division is one of struggle for existence and autonomy. They continued to get indigenous bishops (although the early leaders did not have valid Episcopal ordination). From the 19<sup>th</sup> century onwards, with the arrival of the English Protestant missionaries, they got English education and some were employed in Government services. But in the field of the mission, the contribution of this community is nil. The whole energy of this community was directed towards solving problems arising out of the hierarchical dependence on the Church of Antioch and problems arising from divisions within the Church. By 1912 a section of this community (the Metran Kakshy) succeeded in installing a Catholicos/Maphrian. It was the symbol of autonomy. Fr. P. T. Geevarghese (later Archbishop Mar Ivanios) played a vital role in bringing the Jacobite Patriarch Abd-al Msiha from Tur Abdin, West Asia and in installing the first Catholicos

### **The Revival**

The Malankara Community becomes conscious of its missionary obligation with the missionary projects undertaken by Geevarghese Mar Ivanios, the bishop of

Bethany. Even as a priest, he was interested in the mission and did his best to bring the Good News to the down trodden of the society. Later he founded the Bethany Congregation for men with the main intention of evangelizing the whole of India. To realize this dream, he made special rules for the Congregation by which some of the characteristic life style of Indian Hindu *sanyasis* could be imitated. He made it the rule of his Congregation that the members eat no meat and that they put on simple dress with saffron color to suit the tradition of the Hindus. This way he wanted to revive the mission spirit in young people and to make the Christian mission meaningful and relevant in the Indian Hindu context. This was a revolutionary step in the history of the Puthenkur Malankara Church. What he did as the founder of the Congregation, was continued when he was raised to the rank of a bishop of his Church (1925) with the new name Mar Ivanios. He started many mission centers for the dalits in the central Travancore areas (in the present Kottayam, Pathanamthitta districts of Kerala). From its status as a warring group of Christians, Mar Ivanios gave the Puthenkur Christian community (Jacobites and Orthodox), the Status of a Church with the starting of mission centers.

### **After the Reunion**

When a group from within the Malankara Orthodox community entered into full communion with the Catholic Church, and emerged as the Malankara Catholic Church under the leadership of Mar Ivanios in 1930, the mission spirit was further enkindled and formal missionary projects were undertaken. His main interest was in the Hindu communities spread out in the districts of

Trivandrum and Kanyakumari. Trivandrum was the center of his activities. From Trivandrum he sent missionaries to all places where the Malankara Catholic Church could reach. As a result, many parishes and stations were started. Thousands of people received the Gospel and were converted to Christianity. The achievements of the Malankara Catholic Church after reunion deserve to be qualified as miraculous. In all fields- social educational, spiritual- the Malankara Catholic Church could imprint its own mark. The Church has become one of the biggest missionary Churches. In fact there is no other Christian community in Kerala which has made such great strides in the mission filed as the Malankara Catholic Church. "Through the canonical communion with the Catholic Church, the Malankara Church got a great impetus for missionary activities. Mar Ivanios had the great goal of the evangelization of India"<sup>15</sup> The present diocese of Marthandom with a Christian population of more than sixty thousand individuals is the sole effect of the missionary activities undertaken by the Malankara Catholic Church. Now this diocese, which did not exist in the pre-reunion days, is one of the fastest growing Catholic dioceses in India, making long strides in the field of *mission ad gentes*. New Christian communities are formed, new parishes are created, new social developmental centers are open.

The hundreds of parishes and mission stations in the Malankara Catholic Archdiocese of Trivandrum within the district of Trivandrum are another witness to the successful mission work the Malankara Church is doing. In these areas the Church is taking shape in its full strength. New parishes are

established, hundreds receive baptism, and new centers of social work are open. New educational institutions are begun. The Church is taking roots in these new soils. The reunion movement which was begun with merely five people has now grown into a full-fledged Church of Major Archiepiscopal rank (canonically equivalent to a Patriarch with Synod), capable of undertaking mission obligations by itself and sending missionaries abroad to Europe and America. All these are to be seen as part of the ecclesial identity of the Church.

### Conclusion

The Church of God is missionary by its very nature. No Christian community is worth the name Church if it neglects its primary duty of preaching the Gospel. No liturgical life of spiritual achievements can substitute for the missionary obligation of the Church. The liturgy is important as promoting the life of the Church. The importance of the Reunion movement by means of which the Malankara Catholic Church was established is the fact that with the reunion the missionary spirit of the Malankara Community was revived and rekindled and the Community, which was only a Christian community with no right to be called a church, has regained its status as a Church. Now the Malankara community is a Church in the full sense, because it a Church which fulfills its God-given duty of preaching the Gospel to those who have not heard it. Thus the role of the Malankara Catholic community is that through it its ecclesial character is regained, because the Church by its very nature is missionary. No community, which fails in this field, has the right to be called a Church.

<sup>15</sup> G. Chediath, *The Malankara Catholic Church*. Kottayam, 2003, p. 143



## **DOCUMENTATION**

### *Speeches made in the Synod of Bishops, Rome 2005*

**H. Em. B. VARKEY VITHAYATHIL, Archbishop Major of Ernakulam-Angamaly of the Syro-Malabarians, Cardinal, President of the Synod of the Syro-Malabar Church (INDIA)**

The Eucharist gives a great power to preach the gospel to the whole world. The Syro-Malabar Church is a Eucharist-centered community. The parish churches are crowded on Sundays and many take part in the Eucharist on week days also. It may be due to this fact that our Church is blessed with so many vocations to the priesthood and religious life.

I am happy to note that a good number of the missionary personnel in the mission dioceses of India, even in many of the Latin Rite dioceses is coming from the Syro-Malabar Church and we send priests and religious to Africa, South and North America, Europe and Oceania. But the restriction of the proper territory of this Church for over a

hundred years now, has created serious problems both in her missionary activity as well as the proper pastoral care of her faithful in India and abroad. The St. Thomas Christians of the Syro-Malabar Church have an extraordinary devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mother. Her attitude of always fulfilling the will of God, her humble service to those in need and her radical discipleship even unto the Cross, all these are inspiring us to dedicate ourselves to build up a better society based on justice and peace.

Finally, I consider that the year of the Eucharist, of which the final stage is this synod, is a God-given occasion to all of us to rededicate ourselves to the Eucharistic Lord and to His missionary mandate.

**H.E. MAR JOSEPH POWATHIL, Metropolitan of Changanassery of the Syro-Malabarians (INDIA)**

The Eucharist - and liturgy as a whole - is the most privileged and powerful medium through which the Church transmits the deposit of faith received from the Apostles. Traditions transmitted by liturgy guarantee throughout time the continuity and authenticity of the apostolic faith. Liturgy, especially the Eucharist, is not only the expression of the faith, it is the very 'Epiphany' of the Church. Liturgical abuses therefore do violence to the very ethos of Christian life.

The Oriental Churches have been called 'liturgical Churches' owing to the great emphasis they give to eucharistic celebration and to liturgy as a whole. For them liturgy celebrates the faith handed down by the Apostles, theology explains that which is celebrated and discipline protects, like a shell, that which is celebrated, explained and lived.

The variety of liturgical traditions and therefore of the faith traditions of the Church serves to manifest the richness of the mystery

---

of Christ and the divine plan of salvation. Hence the patrimony of all the Churches must 'remain whole and entire' and the Churches should return to those traditions 'if they have fallen away do to the vicissitudes of time or persons'.

Unfortunately the Oriental Churches have in various ways through the vicissitudes of history failed in different degrees to preserve their valuable heritage. In the present day context of globalisation and standardisation

there is the danger that these small Churches may further lose their perspectives.

Therefore we hope that the Successor of Peter, endowed with the duty of confirming his brethren in faith, will help the Oriental Churches in a special way to grow and bear more effective witness before the world with greater fidelity to their valuable heritage. This will surely strengthen the cause of Christian unity and the proclamation of the mystery of Christ in our times.

### **H.B. Mar Emmanuel III Delly, Catholicos - patriarch of Babylon of the Chaldeans, Head of the Synod of the Chaldean Church (IRAQ)**

A Brief word on the presence of our Lord in the Eucharist according to the tradition, the liturgy and the devotion of the faithful Chaldeans, members of the Oriental Church known as the Chaldean Church which developed in the Empire of Partho and of the Sassanids across the bank of the Euphrates River up to China, Mongolia, Tibet and then India.

This Church born in Mesopotamia and in Persia, had the grace to receive the first preaching by the Apostles and the first Disciples of Christ, already from the first century after Pentecost it teaches us the Eucharistic doctrine confirmed today by the faith and by the doctrine of the Western Catholic Church.

The Chaldean Oriental Church considers Jesus in the Most Holy Sacrament really present in the Eucharist as the "victim for our sins" source of life for men, fire that burns sins and purifies hearts, and often quotes the prophecy of Isaiah in its liturgical books - Isaiah who speaks of the "Servant of

Yahweh" who bears the sins of the world. Jesus in the Eucharist is the light that for the path that leads to Eternal life and the master who teaches us. He is our strength and our consolation in the difficulties and persecutions, he is the living manna which gives us life and supports us. He is the nourishing food of the Banquet which gives us life and supports us. He is the nourishing food of the Banquet which the Heavenly Father made. Jesus gave Himself to His Bride, the Church, and the Church in turn did this through the Priests. The Chaldean Church nurtures a great devotion in the Eucharist participating in the Solemn processions of the Most Holy Sacrament.

She is preparing her children to follow the tradition of their fathers and prays saying: "Merciful Lord, the gift of Yourself to us mortals is great: For water you clothed us with Your Spirit, for bread you made us eat Your Body and for Your living Blood you sanctified us, hence you united us with the Spiritual Entities and You lift us to Heaven from earth Amen".



## NEWS

### Symposium on Dei Verbum

In connection with the Ruby Jubilee celebrations of Vat Council II, a 2 day symposium was had in the Paurastya Vidyapitham of the St. Thomas Ap. Seminary at Vadavathoor, Kottayam, on Dei Verbum, the Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation, published on November 18, 1965. The symposium was held on 17, 18th November 2005. Besides the students and professors of the faculty of Theology of the Paurastya Vidyapitham there were also some participants from other seminaries and regular institutions. There were 4 papers, viz,

church, the interpreter of the Bible, Biblical Interpretation: New Trends after Dei Verbum, Biblical Apostolate in Kerala - the last 40 years and word of God in Scripture and Tradition, presented by Dr. Mathew Vellanickal, Dr. Augustine Mulloor, Dr. Michael Karimattam and Dr. Andrews Mekkattukunnel respectively. A renewed interest in the study of Bible and an urgent need to understand the word of God in the event living circumstances were the results of this symposium, which was really a success.

### Synod of Bishops

A synod of Bishops entitled '11th Ordinary General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops' was held at Rome from 2nd to 23rd October 2005. This synod was opened by Pope Benedict XVI with a Eucharistic celebration in St. Peter's Basilica on 2nd October, 2005. The theme of this synod was 'The Eucharist: Some and Summit of the Life and Mission of the Church'. It was late Pope John Paul II who suggested this theme.

The president of this synod was Pope Benedict XVI and the General Secretary was Archbishop Nikola Eterovic, titular archbishop of Sisak. Cardinal Francis Arinze, Cardinal Juan Thiequez and Cardinal Telesphore Toppo were the Presidents' Delegates. In this synod 256 Synod Fathers from 118 countries participated. Of these 177 are elected, 39 are ex-officiis and 40 are

appointed by the Holy Father. Among these, there were 55 cardinals, 8 patriarchs, 82 archbishops, 123 bishops, 36 Presidents of Bishop's Conferences and 11 Religious. 50 of the Synod Fathers are from Africa, 59 from America, 44 from Asia, 95 from Europe and 8 from Oceania. There were also 32 experts and 27 auditors. The synod came to an end on 23rd October, on which day ended the Eucharistic year proclaimed by John Paul II.

In the opening session Pope Benedict XVI emphasized the 'Mystery of Eucharist, in which the Lord gives us the bread of life and wine of his love and invites us to the banquet of his eternal love. We celebrate the Eucharist in the awareness that its price was the death of the son. But we also know that from this death springs life; love has overcome death.'

### International Congress on the Sacred Scripture

On September 14-18, 2005 there took place at the Aurelia Convention Centre Rome (Domus Pacis and Domus Mariae) an international Congress on "Sacred Scripture in the Life of the Church" to commemorate the 40th anniversary of promulgation of the Dogmatic Constitution Dei Verbum of the Second Vatican Council. On the third day of the Congress His Holiness Benedict XVI

received in audience the participants of the Congress, about 380 biblical scholars from all over the world, in Palazzo Apostolico of Castel Gandolfo. The Syro-Malabar Church was represented by Mar George Punnakkottil, Dr Cyrus Velamparampil, Dr George Kudilil and Dr Andrews Mekkattukunnel.



## **BOOK REVIEW**

**Francis Kanichikattil: Divine Liturgy in the vision Of Narsai.** Bangalore, Dharmaram Publications, 2003, xvi+126p. ISBN 86-86861-49-1.

The author presents a short but detailed commentary on Narsai, the famous commentator of the Chaldean liturgy. He exposes the person and the theological work of Narsai who lived in the 5th Century, especially his work at the School of Edessa, one of the most ancient theological schools of Christianity, of which he was the director. This school was transferred in his lifetime. It was the period of the Christological disputes. In particular, the author scrutinizes the Christology of Narsai. In the second part, he analyses his liturgical work. Indeed, Narsai is known to us, primarily by his homilies on the Eucharist and baptism in the Church of the East, of which we have an excellent English translation by R.H. Connolly. Narsai: The liturgical homilies, Text and Studies, Cambridge, University, 1909, reprint 1967.

Nevertheless, one can notice some serious lacunae in the study of Fr. Kanichikattil. This ought not to come as a surprise, since the author himself warns us that he has limited himself to publishing his thesis in theology, which he presented in 1985. Unfortunately, the modifications and corrections, which he claims to have added, are hardly visible: all throughout book one finds spelling and grammar mistakes. There are many mistakes in the bibliography and in the French language texts. What is worse is that the author seems to be unaware of the developments of the historical questions in the past years. According to Dr. S. Brock and other experts, Homily 17 is certainly from a disciple of Narsai, rather than from Narsai himself. Also, he repeats the opinion, abandoned for many years, that the Institution Words were

omitted in the time of patriarch Iso Yahb III, in the 7th Century (pp. 55, 66-72); or that the Anaphora of Mar Nestorius is a translation of a Greek anaphora (pp. 56,107), an opinion refuted by the studies of P. Youssif, "The Anaphora of Mar Theodor East Syrian; further Evidences", in E. Carr (ed.), *Eulogema. Studies in honor of Robert Taft, s.j.* (Studia Anselmiana, 110, *Analecta Liturgica*, 17), Rome, 1993, 571-591; of A. Gelston, "The Origin of the Anaphora of Nestorius: Greek or Syriac?", in *Bulletin of John Rylands Library* 7:3 (1996) 73-86, and of myself, R. Matheus, *The Third Order of Sanctification*, Kottayam, Oirsi, 2000.

Also, I wonder what the author means by "inculturation of the bible"? (p. 108). It is also surprising to read that Cyril of Jerusalem belonged to the "antiochean trio" (p. 103).

Finally, the author makes an apology of the "Indian anaphoras" of the 1970s, which were inspired by Hindu texts, forgetting that India is a country of many cultures, and that one of them is the Christian culture. On this subject, a well known Anglican liturgist, B. Spinks, has written an excellent article: *The Anaphora for India*. Some theological objections to an Attempt at Inculturation, in *Ephemerides Liturgicae* 95 (1981) 529-549. One of the weaknesses of the Church in India, is that she always wants to copy, either from the West, or from the other religions of India, forgetting her own richness.

The great merit of the author is certainly to have furnished us an analysis of the liturgical commentary of Narsai. The study, which he presents, is, in spite of some weaknesses, enriching. We can thus advise it, in spite of the reservations which we have had to make.

**Fr. Robert Matheus**



# INDEX

## March 2005, Vol. XXVI, No. 1

Christian Orient: Its Background, Vision and Mission - <i>Xavier Koodapuzha</i>	1
The Ecumenical Mission of Catholic Oriental Churches - <i>Archbishop Mar Joseph Powathil</i>	10
The Syriac Churches in Dialogue - <i>Geevarghese Chediath</i>	20
From equalizing Exclusivism to Communion-based Complementarity - <i>John Madey</i>	39
Distinctive Traits of Eastern Liturgies - <i>Bishop Mar Mathew Anikuzhikattil</i>	49
Mass Without the Consecration? The Historic Agreement on the Eucharist Between the Catholic Church and the Assyrian Church of the East Promulgated on 26 October 2001 - <i>Robert F. Taft SJ</i>	68
Holy Communion in the Syro-Malabar Qurbana - <i>Thomas Mannooramparampil</i>	89
The Celebration of Holiness in the Anaphora of the Apostles Addai and Mari - <i>Jose Kochuparampil</i>	119
Prayer of the Heart in the Syriac Tradition - <i>Sebastian Brock</i>	125
The Syro-Malabar Church as an Individual Church - <i>Mathew Vellanickal</i>	133
Priesthood as the "Order" and "Ordering" of the Church - <i>James Palackal</i>	150
Christian Ethics as Walking the Way of the Holy Spirit - <i>Paulachan Kochappilly, CMI</i>	165
Liberated to Worship - <i>Andrews Mekkattukunnel</i>	182
The spread of the Church of the East in the Persian Empire; with special reference to Edessa <i>James Puliurumpil</i>	187

## June 2004 Vol. XXVI No. 2

Preparation of the Last supper: A Chronology of the Passion - <i>Fr. Robert Matheus</i>	3
Martyrology of St. Thomas The Apostle with Special Reference To Syro - Malabar Church <i>Rev. Prof. John Moolan</i>	18
The Love of Christ Towards the Migrants - <i>Thomas Thengumpallil</i>	34
Liturgy And Ethics - <i>Thomas Kozhimala mcbs</i>	43

## September 2005 Vol. XXVI No. 3

Eucharistic Spirituality of Pope John Paul II - <i>Dr. Antony Mannarkulam</i>	2
The Eucharistic Church: In the theological thinking of J.M.R. Tillard - <i>Fr. Thomas Puthukulangara</i>	15
The Historical Background and Theological Perspectives of the Anaphora of Mar Theodore of Mopsuestia - <i>Dr. Jose Kochuparampil</i>	39

## December 2005 Vol. XXVI No. 4

The Malankara Catholic Church and its New Status in the Catholic Communion - <i>Geevarghese Chediath</i>	5
The Sacramental Theology of Archbishop Mar Ivanios - <i>Kurian Valuparambil</i>	14
Church and Mission and the Malankara Community - <i>Philip Chempakassery</i>	35

**IMMENSE SCOPE OF RESEARCH AWAITS YOU  
IN THE GOLDEN TREASURES OF EASTERN THEOLOGIES  
AND WE PROVIDE YOU WITH VALUABLE MATERIALS  
WHICH WILL CERTAINLY INSPIRE YOUR SCHOLARLY PURSUITS  
THROUGH**

# **CHRISTIAN ORIENT**

**A JOURNAL OF EASTERN CHURCHES FOR CREATIVE THEOLOGICAL THINKING**

**AN INTERNATIONALLY ACCLAIMED QUARTERLY JOURNAL OF  
ORIENTAL THEOLOGY PUBLISHED SUCCESSFULLY FOR THE LAST  
TWENTY SIX YEARS OPENS BEFORE YOU THE COLOURFUL SPECTACLE  
OF PRECIOUS GEMS IN THE THEOLOGICAL ARENAS OF  
EASTERN LITURGY, SPIRITUALITY, ECCLESIOLOGY  
AND ECUMENISM WITH A SPECIAL ACCENT ON  
THE SYRIAC ORIENT AND THE ST THOMAS  
CHRISTIAN TRADITION.**

## **THIS QUARTERLY HIGHLIGHTS**

- ❖ Scientific studies on ecumenical ventures
- ❖ Different dimensions of the oriental ethos
- ❖ Current developments in the liturgical theology
- ❖ Perspectives of eastern ecclesiological traditions
- ❖ Investigations into the various aspects of the Canon Law
- ❖ Insights into the inspiring lives of the Fathers, the Saints and the Martyrs of the East

## **EDITORIAL CONSULTANTS**

Abp Joseph Powathil, Abp George Valiamattom, Bp Sebastian Valloppilly, Bp George Punnakottil,  
Bp A.D. Mattom, Bp Joseph Pallickaparampil, Bp Paul Chittilappilly, Bp George Alencherry,  
Bp Sebastian Vadakel, Bp Joseph Kallarangatt, John Madey (Paderborn), T.E. Federici (Rome), Geevarghese Panickar,  
Mathew Vellanickal, Xavier Koodapuzha

## **All Correspondence to**

The Managing Editor  
Christian Orient, P.B. No.1  
Kottayam 686 010, Kerala  
Ph. 0481-571809, 571807  
E-mail: ktm\_tmannoor@sancharnet.in  
Web page Address: www.oirsi.com